THE PLAYSTATION®3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

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WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

RATCHET &CLANK

How Sony's galactic heroes will save PS3

PLUS!

PSP GPS Borderlands **EyeToy Aquarium**
GRAW2 online Best HDTVs **Mafia 2...**

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“Stranglehold promises the thrill of a lifetime.”
MAXIM

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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

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JOHN WOO PRESENTS

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Silent Hill V Witness the PS3 sickness inside
What's in the Box?
How Half-Life 2 became the biggest game on PS3
Why Skate owns Tony Hav
Kojima on MGS4's bosses
The game with 500,000 g
Gran Turismo 5 latest info
WIFI BINGO MAFIA 2 HAZE FALLOUT III
Future

The only magazine with a playable PS3 Blu-ray disc

Playable Blu-ray disc
Ten demos including Heavenly Sword, Lemmings, Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 and Blast Factor.

First for PlayStation 3
This month's exclusives: first PES 2008 and Skate reviews, Kojima talks MGS4 bosses and a chilling first look at Silent Hill V.

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PLAYSTATION 3 PLAYSTATION PORTABLE **PLAYSTATION 2**

PSM3 Start

* See Skate Review page 60

"The *real* PS3 launch begins on page 22..."

PS3 might have launched on March 23, but seeing *Ratchet & Clank* in action is like booting it up for the first time. Defining moment? Zooming-in and seeing Ratchet's incredible furry ears, as approximately six billion – give or take – cars zip about in the ludicrously-colourful background. After countless false dawns, and with Sony's talk of PS3 becoming a recordable freeview TV tuner (see page 10), PSP a GPS satellite map and, er, Sixaxis control forming the basis of a decent game (see *Lair* on page 78), it's easy to forget that somewhere in PS3's dark innards lies the most powerful *games* machine on earth – and one capable of one of the most colourful, thrilling games in, well, console history. Enjoy the issue.

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
One all-night Ratchet & Clank session
67 painful skating stunts gone wrong
97 big cups of coffee

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"A vivid games education that wallops the senses""
Ratchet & Clank is the finest PS3 game yet – page 22

"A tide of blood and testosterone"
Viking is PS3's goriest game – page 52

"Practically invalidates the entire Tony Hawk series..."
Why **Skate** is essential, whether you're into skateboarding or not – page 60

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The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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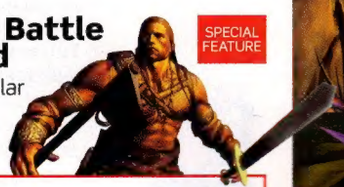

"The home-coming that they and PS3 deserve" COVER FEATURE

Ratchet & Clank make a superb comeback – page 22

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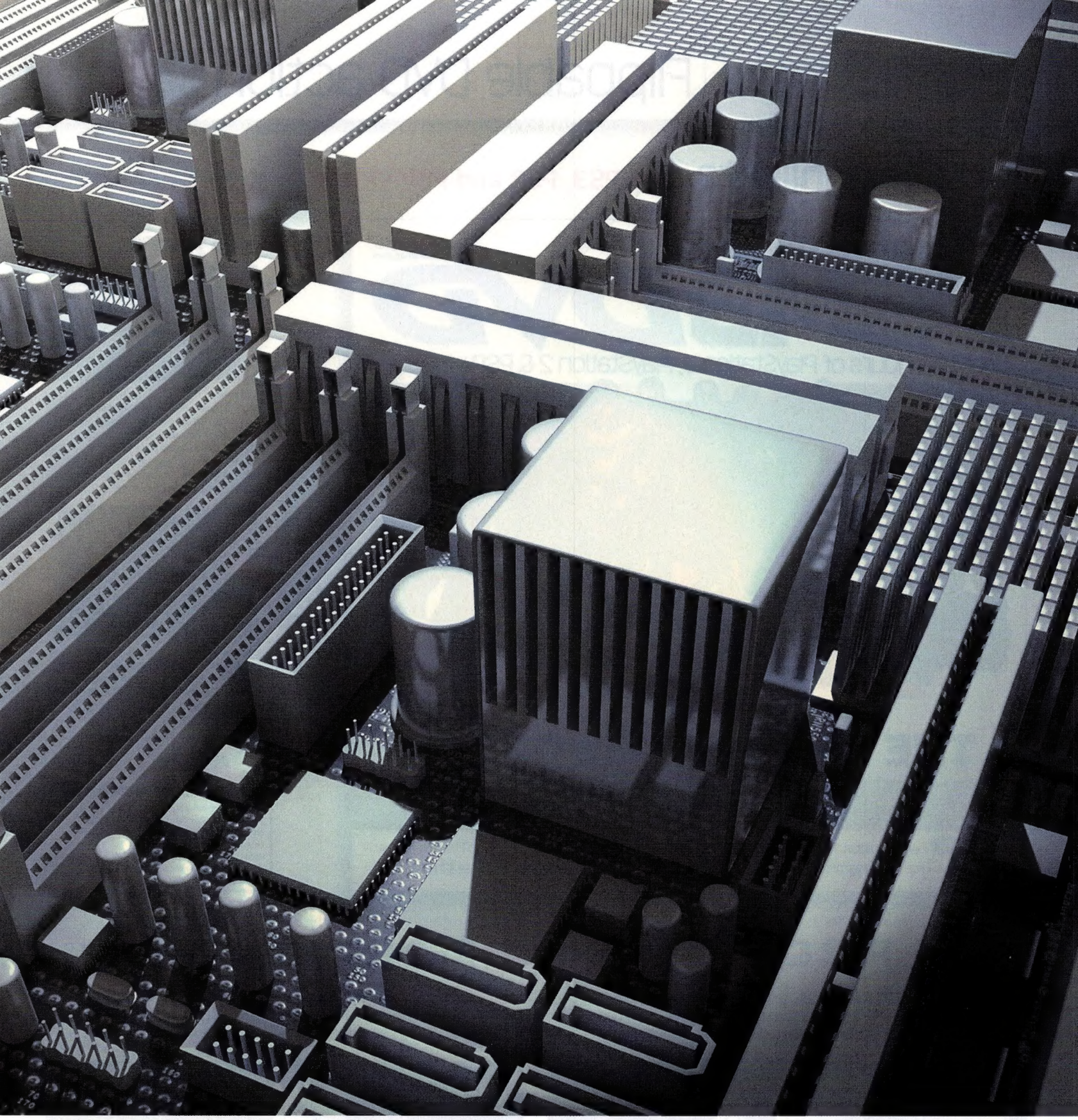
Lair is here, but there's something wrong beneath its scaly surface – page 78



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DVD Highlights New PS3, PS2 and PSP videos

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SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3

Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar. Select the disc and press △. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

Step two
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails – click ⊗ to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

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PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE All-new footage of all the biggest PS3 games, plus new titles like id's *Rage*. This month, take a look at *Killzone 2*, *Smackdown 2008*, *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground*, *Medal Of Honor: Airborne* and more.

NFS ProStreet
The last *NFS* on PS3 was a painful Xbox 360 port. This, though, looks ace. Like the smoke? Impressive.

Call Of Duty 4
Visually, a near match for *Killzone 2* – amazing for a game due out next month. Love the new setting, too.

+ Sega Rally | **Lair** | Conan | **Rage** | Madden 08 | **Stranglehold** | Skate | **More**

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – are a must-see. This month, it's like Christmas come early – watch *MGS4*, *The Agency*, *Skate*, *Home* and loads more in action.

Army Of Two
EA's thrilling-looking co-op shooter isn't too far from the shops now. *Please* be as good as you look, *AOT*.

PS3 Game Saves
To get 100% complete PS3/PSP game saves (including *Resistance*), copy these files to a memory stick.

+ Time Crisis 4 | **Blacksite: Area 51** | Quake Wars | **Turning Point** | **More**

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PS3 REPORT

Sony's Freeview TV tuner and Go! PSP plans exposed

Sony announce new TV recorder for PS3, plus new Wi-Fi add-ons for PSP

While it may seem a little 'off topic' for PS3 fans eager for new games, Sony's recent 'raft' of announcements at the recent Games Convention 2007 show they've not lost the plot completely.

In fact, the August 22 announcement from Leipzig, shows that rather than take their eye off the ball, Sony are very carefully eyeing a much bigger picture – one that involves you using your PS3 and PSP for practically everything. First up was a new hardware and software combination called PlayTV alongside new PSP features, Go! Messenger, Go! Explore and Go! Video.

PlayTV for PS3 is a small, PSP-sized box that plugs into your PS3 and gives it Freeview TV playback and the ability to record shows to your hard drive. It's certainly not new technology – so-called PVRs (personal video recorders) have been around since the launch of Freeview over here, but they have failed to replace the humble VHS tape in most people's homes – the most successful PVR in the UK being Sky's subscription-only Sky+ box.

Play time

The PlayTV box sits between your TV aerial socket and your PS3. Simply plug it into your PS3 and plug in your aerial lead and you're ready to go. With it plugged in, PlayTV will appear as new option in your Video Menu. Select that and you'll be given a full, seven day listing for Freeview channels. Scroll through, find something you like the look of and mark it to record. You can even record two shows at once. Sony are even offering a 'series link' feature – much loved by Sky+ owners – that allows users to mark favourite shows and have the box automatically rack up the next in the series for recording. This is something missing from practically every other Freeview PVR.

So, at its simplest level PlayTV gives PS3 owners an easy to program, high quality TV recorder that comes without a subscription and with features to rival Sky+, all for a bargain price of (rumour has it) £75-£100. But you'll also be able to stream PlayTV to your PSP via Wi-Fi. Again, it's nothing new (you can stream content from your Video menu to your PSP using the Remote Play feature already - see pg105) but now that content can be live TV, or shows you've recorded. Watching your TV in the bath, bedroom and garden (and browsing the listings and programming your next recordings) will be a revelation to many.

Plus, via Wi-Fi you can do exactly the same thing anywhere in the world – yup, watch the X-Factor while holidaying in

Talk Radio

While Freeview digital doesn't have quite the same appeal as the Sky+ service, there's still a lot of decent channels. BBC3 and E4 are good for British comedy, while Film4 should satiate film buffs' needs with weekly 'seasons' of classic movies. You'll also be able to pick up Setanta Sports for your footie needs, as well as all the major radio stations with crystal clear audio quality.

Swaziland or catch up with last weeks Corrie halfway up the Eiger, provided you're within range of a wireless access point.

It's exactly the kind of 'futuristic vision of tomorrow' tomfoolery we speculated about back before PS3 was announced and we're delighted that such an add-on has been made real. If you're new to PVRs and remote viewing we think you're in for a pleasant surprise – once you've tasted recording two shows at once, and watching them back in the bath, you never go back. And it doesn't end there. Check the three new PSP 'Go!' services over there.

All in all we love the idea of PlayTV and Go! but don't go thinking we've gone soft, Sony. A little more good news on the game front would put a broader smile on our face than any add-on could ever hope to.

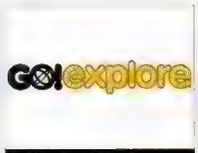
Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony | **ETA** February

Add-ons Sony's 'brand extensions' in full

Including free PSP global phone calls, a GPS travel map and a video camera...

Go! Messenger for PSP

Adds instant Wi-Fi chat to your PSP so you can talk with friends anywhere. You can use an on-screen keyboard, but with the supplied headset you get full voice chat – so that's basically free phone calls to anywhere in the world. And by connecting Go! Cam PSP Camera you can communicate via video too.

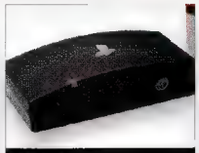


Go! Explore for PSP

This software comes complete with a small GPS device that attaches to the USB port at the top of your PSP. With this in place your PSP becomes a full-featured GPS tracking device with access to traffic info and the ability to map out a route between two postcodes. No launch date as yet.

Sky TV on PSP

Slightly overshadowed by the PlayTV box is this new download store from Sony and Sky. Soon you'll be able to browse and watch selected Sky content on your PSP, as you subscribe (prices TBA) to dedicated Sports, Entertainment and Animation packages, as well as watch some pay-per-view events.



PlayTV

Adds a Freeview box to your PS3 and uses its hard-drive to store shows. Massively exciting... if you haven't already got a perfectly good PVR or Sky+ box and don't mind leaving your PS3 switched on all the time. Hmm... Again, you're going to have to wait until "early 2008" to give it a try. We'll let you know how it does.

Home and the Store

Play TV will sit alongside the already announced *Home* 'virtual world' and PlayStation Store 'virtual shop' PS3 extensions. It's clear that Sony are bent on dreaming up ways to use that hard drive and powerful Cell chip in your lounge. Maybe you'll never need any other box of tricks than PS3 again.

ON THE DISC
We'll have all these games on the disc soon

The Opinionator

"Games need better use of the Sixaxis controls"

Sixaxis motion control – or rather its crummy implementation in 99.99% of all PS3 games – is a running office joke. We don't derive any pleasure from ruthlessly mocking a potentially innovative feature – well, a *little* – but for the insults to stop, developers have to stop crow-barring motion controls into games at the last minute.

Six appeal

Here's a thought – make a game *entirely* with Sixaxis control in mind – in the same way *LocoRoco* was designed around the strengths and weaknesses of PSP. Or don't. Sixaxis controls should be intuitive, responsive and above all, fun. If it doesn't feel natural – bin it.

The problem, of course, is that Sony *insist* on games having an element of Sixaxis control – forcing developers to contrive absurd solutions to games built with the sticks in mind. Solution? Simplicity. We don't want to waggle the pad about for five minutes to break a safe in *Splinter Cell*. We just want to take a quick throw-in in *PES*, perform a barrel-roll in *Warhawk* or execute a neck-snap in *MGS*.

Wii can do it

We don't want to total our Ferrari going around a hairpin at 100mph because the cat brushed by our feet as we tilted the pad.

There are too many instances of the Sixaxis being either absurdly twitchy or achingly unresponsive. Nintendo has proved there's a market for this new control method, as legions of kids, grannies and – if Nintendo's lifestyle pics can be believed – supermodels swinging their Wii remotes attests. Sony – don't *force* developers to use Sixaxis. It's putting us *off* motion control. Build a game focused on Sixaxis functionality – and the rest will come. **Dave Meikleham**

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

Square Enix are remaking *Final Fantasy VII* on PS3

THE TRUTH

At E3 2005, Square Enix showed off a video of *FFVII*'s intro sequence rendered on PS3 hardware. This caused fans to erupt with delight, taking the video as confirmation that an *FFVII* remake was in the works. But it's not. Nope, Square are too busy making *Final Fantasy XIII, FFVII: Crisis Core, FFXII: Revenant Wings* and a dozen other spin-offs and original IPs for that. An online petition for a remake garnered 20,000 signatures, but when sent to Square Enix it was met with the reply, "Sorry, but our Japanese teams are busy with other projects." But don't completely lose faith, because the company have yet to issue a definitive 'no'. The game is so dearly loved by so many millions of people, they'd be foolish not to do it eventually.

Thrill List

The latest news on PlayStation's hottest games, every issue

1 Battlefield: Bad Company
Taking damage to new heights

Most destructive FPS ever? *Definitely* judging by explosive in-game footage of *Battlefield: Bad Company*. EA's team-shooter uses the Frost Bite engine designed by developers DICE, allowing you to decimate almost every square inch of terrain. Struggling to find your way out of a forest? Hop in a tank and plough through the trees. Looking for a way out of room? Blow a hole in *any* of the walls for an instant exit. There's talk of a more cohesive single player mode too – you play as a member of B Company hunting for a precious haul of gold. We can't wait for this. More soon.

Pub EA | **Dev** DICE | **ETA** 2008

Blown away If all the explosions look half as good as this we'll be happy.

"Sony were slack-jawed when we showed them"
Call Of Duty 4 page 15

"Promises mindless destruction aplenty"

Top gun The military vehicles of *Battlefield* look great and will take you and your buddies into the action quickly.

2 Conflict: Denied Ops

More armies of two

If *Kane & Lynch* and *Army Of Two* weren't enough... *Conflict: Denied Ops* marks the birth of the 'Co-op shooter' genre on PS3. Developer Pivotal's strategic FPS stars a pair of mercenaries, with locations including South America, Russia and Africa. You can provide covering fire, say, or sneak into buildings while your buddy distracts the guards. 'Puncture Technology' lets you shoot through walls to create sniping points or burst through walls.

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Pivotal Games | **ETA** November

3 Borderlands

Now with 500,000 weapons

Developers Gearbox, of *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway* fame, are swapping Nazis for giant space bats. Set in a distant galactic outworld, *Borderlands* blends Joss Whedon's Firefly, with *MotorStorm* and *Resistance*, as you hunt down once-dormant beasts awoken by the planet's 40-year seasonal cycle – a fact unknown to the original settlers. Armed with a selection of over 500,000 randomly-generated guns, with seamless transition between driving and FPS sections, we were impressed by the scale, and promise of randomly generated terrain – so you never play the same level twice. May be a mash-up of too many genre cliches to be essential, mind – but time will tell.

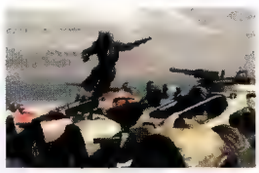
Pub 2K | **Dev** Gearbox | **ETA** Spring

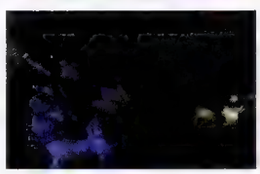
4 Alone In The Dark

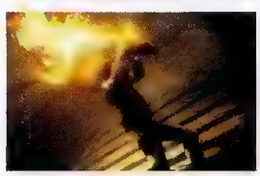
The dark is rising...

Rumours of a potential delay to this psychological thriller have, thankfully, been quashed, so an early 2008 release looks likely. Set in and around New York, the Leipzig Games Show demo exceeded expectations. As the game's mystery evil moves in, buildings fall to bits, leading to a mad scramble for safety. The in-car bits look amazing, as explosive debris and rain pelt the windscreen. It's one to watch.

Pub Atari | **Dev** Eden Games | **ETA** March







Alone in the Borderlands Jump between jeeps in *Borderlands*, and whack people with chairs in *AITD*.

5 Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

Kicks off soon

Yes, the Master League interview shots and crowd scenes *are* inanimate, but with a chunkier look and feel, we're expecting big things when we review *PES* next month.

Pub Konami | **Dev** KCET | **ETA** Oct

TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF THE FANTASY EPIC DAY WATCH IN CINEMAS ON OCTOBER 5TH, TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX AND PSM3 ARE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO SEE IT FIRST. FOR FREE!

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Day Watch – or Dnevnoi Dozor for those of you who speak Russian out there – is the second instalment of the trilogy based on the best-selling Science Fiction novels of Sergei Lukyanenko. We're big fans of Day Watch's predecessor, Night Watch, and the films are essentially Russia's answer to the Matrix and Lord of the Rings. Set in modern-day Moscow, the film revolves around the balance maintained between the forces of Light and Darkness, the result of an ancient truce between opposing sides in an almighty ruckus. The story sees Light agent Anton learn of an artifact that can change the course of history, so he sets out to recover it and protect Moscow from apocalyptic destruction. It's directed by Timur Bekmambetov and it's a gripping combination of special effects, story and action. Don't miss it.

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

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"Looks like Stranglehold, but not as good"
Wet page 17

PS3 REPORT

"Best-looking game on PS3"

COD4 developer blows own trumpet...

Maiden Grant Grant Collier is confident that *Call Of Duty 4* will be the best in the series yet.

We caught up with Grant Collier of *COD4* developer Infinity Ward at the Leipzig Games Show, to explain how they're tapping PS3's potential...

On Sony' initial reaction to *COD4*

"Sony were slack-jawed when we showed them the demo – they told us they were used to developers giving them the shaft for PS3 versions of a game. We're running at 60fps on PS3, where games like *Madden* are only running at 30fps.

On the differences between Microsoft and Sony

"At Microsoft they've got lots of really good reps and we can talk to them at the highest levels. But Sony is like a hydra. You've got Europe, US and Japan. You're never really sure who the right guy to talk to is. It's a bit of a black box. I'd like to change that if I could. Sony have never sent any reps over to our shop. We've always had to go to them." "

On reaction to the online multi-player beta test

"People are playing it until 3am, even when they're working next day. A guy texted me from another Activison studio and said it was the best multiplayer game he'd ever played."

Read the full interview at www.psm3mag.com

The PSM3 Wrong-Righter

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Spotted some Bertie Bollax in PSM3? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Rubbing the wax-hot polish of truth over past issues

LOCOROCO IS COMING TO PS3 — ☑ RIGHT

As we speak, you're probably playing *LocoRoco Cocoreccho* – an interactive wallpaper revealed in last month's Insider column, including its 'new ways to play *LocoRoco*'. Still, we're not so keen about shepherding the blobs with a bloody butterfly. What happened to just using the tilt pad?

...ike Two's recent ... history. We'll see...
LocoRoco developer Tsutomu Kouno was ...labbing about the existence of the – barely secret – PS3 sequel at the recent Develop ...rence in Brighton. Hinting that he ... to "provide a new way of playing", ...about how ... and AI and physi...

LOCO MOTION

PSM 92 page 16

WARNING SYSTEM MALFUNCTIONS — ☒ WRONG

For some reason – tiredness/eye strain/madness – we managed to slip duplicate entries into our Early Warning System on page 105. We had *Call Of Duty 4*, *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground*, *Army Of Two* and a couple of other titles on the release schedule for entirely different dates. But all's sorted this month. We, er, think.

Clive Barker's Jeric... DATE MIX-UP
Conan
Army Of Two
Silent Hill Origins
...ed For Speed ProStreet
...f Duty 4

PSM 92 page 105

MORE FOR YOUR FINGERS

Metal Slug Anthology

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Blade Dancer

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Why We Love...

Grady Hunt

Ratchet Maestro and pioneer of chicken guns

What has he done?

He's acted as Senior Producer on all the PS2 *Ratchet & Clank* games, which have constantly pushed the envelope in terms of taking Sony's machine to its technological limits. He also worked on PS2's other premier platform series *Jak & Daxter*. Most recently he produced PS3's dark, brooding shooter, *Resistance*.

Why we like him?

Because *Ratchet*, along with the *Jak & Daxter* games, single-handedly reinvented platform games on PS2. Before the lovable Lombax and his cheery cyborg chum sprang to life, most PS2 platform games had been uninspired, poorly-executed *Mario 64* clones. *Ratchet* introduced seamless worlds, frenetic shooting action and the most imaginative weapons on the system. Anyone who comes up with a gun that morphs your enemies into chickens is OK in our book.

He also runs what sounds like the most fun team in the world. Job perks at his company Insomniac include a fully stocked kitchen, basketball court and even a putting green. No wonder it's been named one of the Best Small Companies in America for the last three years.

What's he doing now?

Putting the finishing touches to this month's cover game, *Tools Of Destruction*.

Who are you?
Name Grady Hunt
Role Producer
Key Games *Ratchet & Clank, Jak, Resistance: Fall of Man*

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

When Sony announced PSP back in 2004, the first UMD shown to the world was *Gran Turismo*, sparking rumours that **GT Mobile** was imminent – but three years later, nothing. Until now. At the recent Leipzig Games Show, PSM3 raised the issue with Polyphony Digital's Kazunori Yamauchi, who nodded sympathetically, suggesting they'll finish *GT5*, and *then* make GT on PSP, causing the entire room – including Kaz – to burst into laughter. Kaz also hinted at PS3 programming difficulties – that's why **GT5's** once-mooted car damage has been put on hold, though Kaz hoped it would be available later as a download (same for weather effects). Kaz also hoped to include a rumble function... using the official steering wheel peripheral (manufacturer TBC).

"Sony will release *GT5* on PS3... and then the PSP game"

Sadly, the UK PAL conversion of Sony's **Everybody's Golf 5** is facing delays, too – our source suggests it'll be held back until early next year. Damn.

Disney Interactive are investing millions into game development. They've recently acquired *Deus Ex* creator, Warren Spector's Junction Point studio, along with Black Rock – the Brighton developers formerly known as Climax. Disney are focusing on original games development, hoping to shake their image as purveyors of shonky movie tie-ins. And the House Of Mouse isn't the only movie monolith pumping more money into games – **Warner Bros** are also getting involved. There's talk of them reclaiming their **Harry Potter** licence (currently leased to EA) – plus they own the movie rights to blockbusters like Batman, The Matrix, Superman, Ocean's Thirteen, 300 and, er, Free Willy.

Why are so many cross-platform games leading on Xbox 360? At the recent Game's Convention in Leipzig, a dedicated Sony Europe developer was overheard saying "If one more developer whinges about how hard it is to work with PS3, I'll go mental". A more precise explanation was offered by **Top Spin 3** developers PAM Development, who cited PS3's complex seven core processor – and the need for parallel processing to maximise PS3's power – as the root of the problem, hailing Microsoft's software support systems "They're primarily a software company, and their developer support systems are firmly established". On the flip side, they did think PS3 was powerful, and all developers needed was time – just like the early days of PS2.

Capcom's rumoured next-gen **Bionic Commando** might be joined by another exciting retro remake – details are super-secret, but think about an awesome SNES game and you'll be on the right track.

Finally, journalists were banned from asking **Tony Hawk** questions about EA's rival **Skate** during interviews at the Leipzig Games Show. Check the review on page 60 for a clearer indication why...

Hawks above *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground* is out soon. Is Hawk scared of *Skate*? The signs point to 'maybe'.

"Could change how we think of *GT* forever"
Gran Turismo 5 page 18

Little gem Here's Rubi, star of *Wet*. Calm down, boys. Will this be any good? We're not sure.

PS3 REPORT

Wet dream

Wet's Rubi makes Lara Croft look like a frumpy housewife

Someone's been watching Grindhouse. This new action caper from Sierra mimics Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's homage to vintage schlock cinema with its grubby visuals, retro rock and roll soundtrack, overblown action and sexy bad-ass heroine. And that's no bad thing.

Looking like *Tomb Raider* meets *Total Overdose*, *Wet* follows the adventures of Rubi, a tattooed, sword-wielding mercenary chick who's after the blood of a mystery man who betrayed her and left her for dead. Speaking of Tarantino... Kill Bill, anyone?

The game's clearly aimed at teenagers and sexually-frustrated blokes – Rubi is one of the most feminism-baiting game characters we've ever seen. In the trailer she's sat in a bath with her enormous jubbers barely concealed by the water line. Crikey.

We saw *Wet* at Leipzig and, in all honesty, it looked like Midway's *Stranglehold*, but – at this early stage – not quite as good. In fact, the developer even said as much, explaining – oh, dear – it's "like *Stranglehold* without the destruction, but more acrobatics". Oh.

Ambitious level designs suggest *Wet* is more about daring leaps and stylish gunplay than sheer destruction, and the trailer backs this up. Rubi slides down zipwires, backflips off walls and fills no-good punks full of lead. It's silly, it's sassy and still might be one to watch in late 2008.

Pub Sierra | **Dev** A2M | **ETA** October 2008

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The mob thought they'd killed me, Wrong, I'm back, headless but not brainless. Deadhead, huh. I'm an ex private dick with guts and I crave revenge.
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ON THE DISC
See GT5 Prologue in action on next month's disc

PS3 REPORT

Gran Turismo 5 revs up

Play *GT5 Prologue* online *this year*

Polyphony Digital are releasing a 'prologue' version of *Gran Turismo 5* before – shock – the end of the year, as a Blu-ray with a rumoured Euro price of 45 Euros (£30), or as a download (£TBC). Billed as a full game like *Warhawk*, not a demo, it features 40 cars and five tracks, plus extensive online features – a first for the series – and 1080p support. Unlike *GT4 Prologue*, the game won't be a series of license tests; instead you'll be able to work your way through a classic *GT*-style Career mode.

We were shown *Prologue* at Leipzig by series creator Kazunori Yamauchi, noting its impressive real-time HDR (High Dynamic Range) lighting and shimmering reflections sliding across the cars. It did, however, look a little sterile in places, with no car damage – shame.

It sounds familar, but its online features certainly aren't. Now you can race 1-16 people across the PlayStation Network and the 'My Page' feature adds an element of customisation.

With Standard or Professional driving physics, *GT* is evolving. The visuals astound and, despite the clinical sheen and lack of damage, the handling is as assured and compelling as ever.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Polyphony Digital | **ETA** December

Features – Five reasons to care about *GT5 Prologue*

Car in the community – Polyphony Digital get creative with PS3...

'My Page'

From here you can view your race calendar, set a real-time 3D background and watch lap videos from other PSN users – plus, rumours suggest, watch local car TV shows like Top Gear. It also links directly to *Home* – details TBC.

Pit crews

A purely aesthetic detail, but one that adds to the realism of the game. Depending on what model of car you choose, the crew's uniforms and their surroundings will change to reflect it. Here's the Alfa Romeo team in action.

More licenses

The big one, of course, being Ferrari. In our demo Kazunori was driving a crimson F430. Other new motors include the Le Mans-winning Audi R8 and Nissan's shapely GT-R prototype. Many old favourites return too.

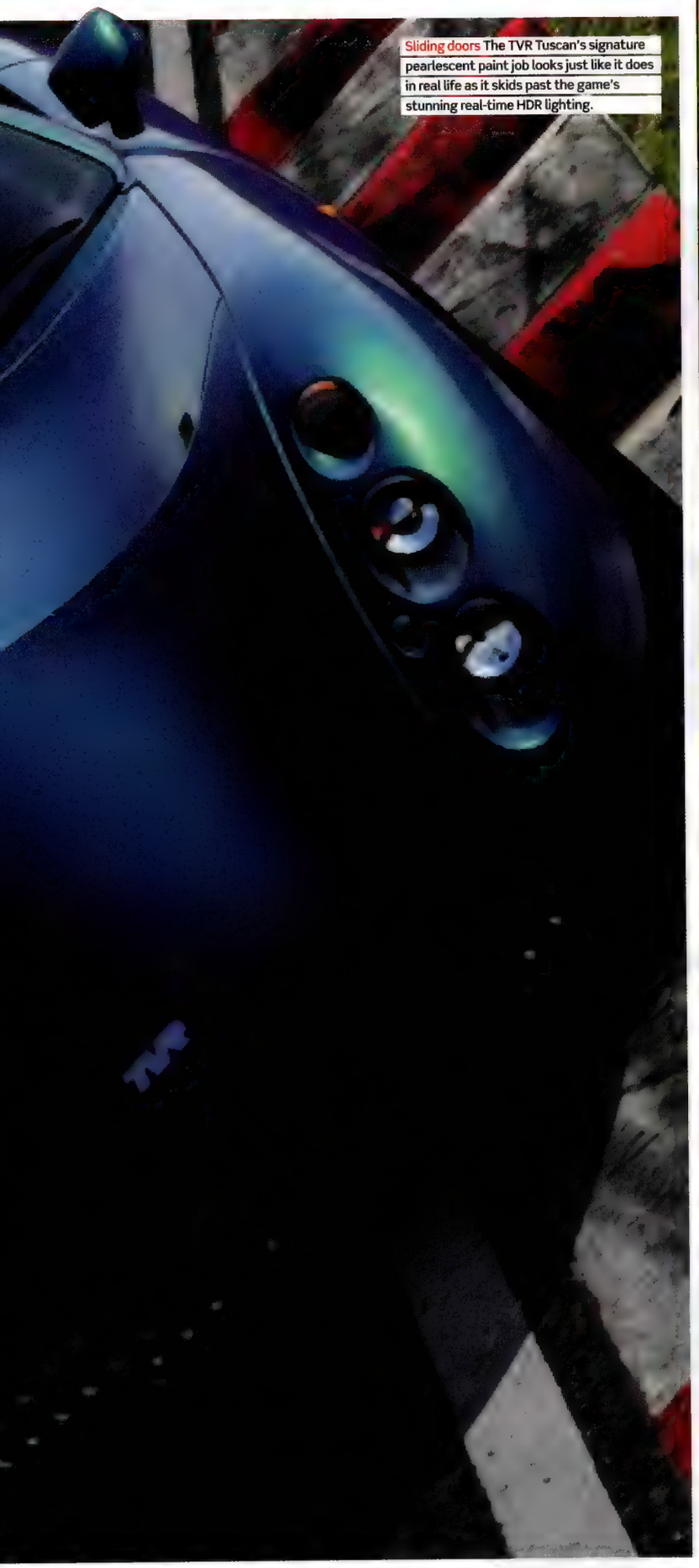
Detailed interiors

With 200,000 polygons per car to play with, Polyphony have rendered the insides of their cars with as much staggering detail as the exteriors. In first-person view you can see working speedometers and reflections in the mirrors.

B-Spec mode

Kazunori is bringing back *GT4*'s B-Spec mode. This let you tune your car and then watch an AI race based on your settings. Sounds dull, but *GT* experts used this to complete the game's gruelling endurance races which take hours to finish.

"Steadily climbing the ladder of notoriety"
Mafia 2 page 20



Sliding doors The TVR Tuscan's signature pearlescent paint job looks just like it does in real life as it skids past the game's stunning real-time HDR lighting.

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HAVE YOU GOT THE HEAD FOR IT?

The mob thought they'd killed me, Wrong, I'm back, headless but not brainless. Deadhead, huh. I'm an ex private dick with guts and I crave revenge. It's time for those shiny-shoed wise guys to face the music. Some smart detective work and my ingenious interchangeable head scam will see me nail the creeps.

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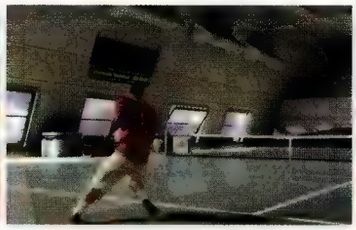
ON THE DISC
We'll have all these games on upcoming discs

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

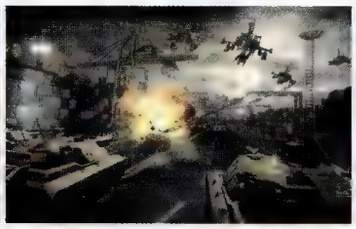


PS3 Top Spin 3 Will you make the 'new balls' joke or shall we?

Details **Pub** 2K | **Dev** Rainbow Illusion Softworks | **Genre** Sports

Lowdown *Top Spin's* PS3 debut is billed as the '*Pro Evo* of tennis' – a balance of realism, depth and immediacy. For example, there'll be less *Virtua Tennis*–style full-length dives, or sudden snap shots, with the emphasis on authentic foot placement and timing. Expect a comprehensive create-a-player mode, plus intricate visuals – you'll be able to see grass and clay stains on your player after diving across the court. Visually, it's chunkier and more realistic than *VT3*, with decent likenesses.

ETA June 2008



PS3 Tom Clancy's EndWar Let's talk tactics...

Details **Pub** Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft | **Genre** Strategy

Lowdown Twist? You control battles with your voice. Yup, via the bundled USB headset, *EndWar* allows you to bark commands like 'Unit 5 – engage – area B', along with other pre-set commands from a drop-down menu, as you combat the enemy in *Command & Conquer*-style warfare. If things aren't going your way, you can call in a Kinetic Strike that will literally end the war. Voice recognition works well, but a brief demo was baffling to say the least.

ETA January 2008

PS3 LocoRoco Cocoreccho Not the moving experience we wanted

Details **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Sony | **Genre** Puzzle

Lowdown Yes, the first *LocoRoco* on PS3 is no more than an interactive wallpaper. We can't say we're not slightly disappointed – you play through the game as a butterfly rather than controlling the landscape via Sixaxis as we'd anticipated. Still, it looks beautiful – the little blobs have been given a lovely HD sheen complete with... wait for it... more prominent eyelids. Hmm. It is a free download, mind, so worth investigating – check the PS Store now.

ETA Out now

PS3 Mafia 2 Are you ready to be a made man?

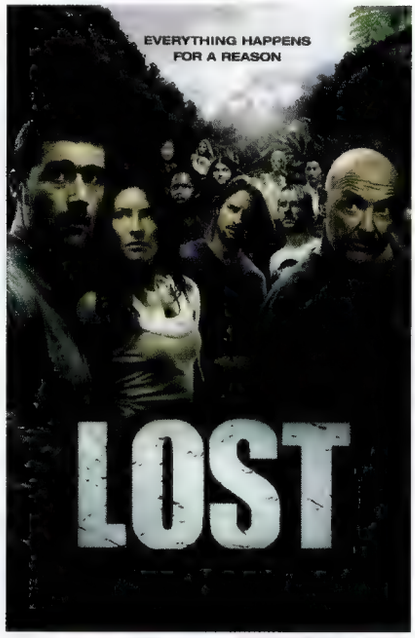
Details **Pub** 2K | **Dev** High 2K | **Genre** Action

Lowdown New York (pronounced 'Nu Yoik'), scene of many a crime game, is to host yet another shady operation or three in *Mafia 2*. Set in the late '40s, it casts you as a small-time thug steadily climbing the ladder of notoriety within the Mafia. Obviously. The first title was a massive hit on PC (though less so on PS2) with its ace driving bits and brutal shooty sections. Whatever happens, it's bound to be better than *The Godfather*, capisce?

ETA Summer 2008

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy



"The Lost game will be awesome!"

Oh man, this will be the best game ever. It's set during season one so we'll get to meet loads of characters like Locke and Hurley and Sawyer. And just think of the new adventures you'll get up to. They'll be *mental*. But not so mental as to reveal anything specific, because that would clash with the show and cause holes in the plot.

You play Elliott, who's a journalist with amnesia. He looks like Jack, but he's *not* Jack. He's a new character with a back story that will change our view of the show's key characters! Or, er, not, because it would mess with the canon of the show. But he'll still be brilliant.

Smoke on the water

But the best bit will be the puzzles – cracking codes and revealing the mysteries of the DHARMA Initiative. Finding out what the numbers mean. But, er, once you do I imagine Elliott will have to be killed, else he'd go around telling everyone and that would mess up, er...

Nah, forget the plot. This should just be fun. Imagine a boss battle with the smoke monster – you'd have to make a rocket launcher out of bark and coconuts. I can't see how Ubisoft can mess up. It's not like there are millions of Lost fans who pick apart the show and would do so with the game...

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Jump in.

XBOX 360 LIVE

Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools Of Destruction

March 2007? Pah. The real PS3 launch starts here.

KNOW IT NOW

- Spectacularly over-the-top gun combat? ✓
- Billions of tinkly nuts and bolts ✓
- Optional, well-done stealth features? ✓
- Any racing/flying action whatsoever? ✗

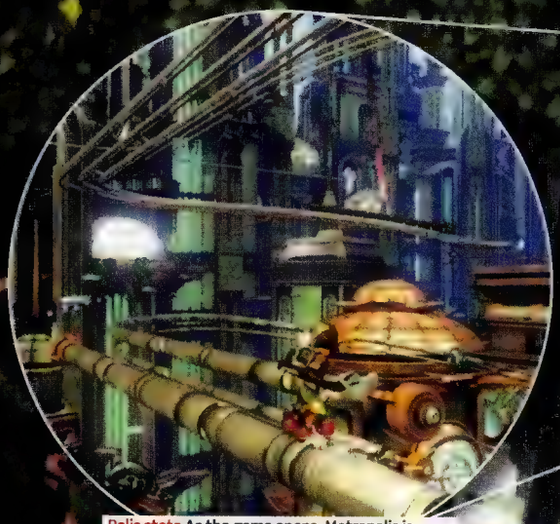
Please, feel free to disagree, but we're going to come straight out and say it: the *Ratchet & Clank* series is PlayStation's current mascot. And it's not just because the lead character is a squat, midget-human-mammal hybrid with a penchant for 'platforming elements'. They've consistently shown the world what PS2 (and recently, through *R&C: Size Matters*, PSP) is capable of when properly pushed, all the while returning often enough to keep its league of fans entertained and engaged for ages.

Jak & Daxter? They've arguably lost their way, even if it was a fun old ride. Sly Raccoon? Never got the attention he deserved. Lara, *GTA*, *Pro Evolution Soccer*, *Metal Gear* and *Resident Evil*? Dismissed on account of being multiformat whores, over the years. Kratos? He's arguably the strongest challenger, but just hasn't managed the mileage that Insomniac's furry lambax and his quirky robotic sidekick have. And now stumpy gun-toting space-saviour Ratchet is back in full force, to slap down the doubters and tap PS3's monstrous potential with a dazzling, technicolour mushroom cloud of a shoot-'em-up.

Ratchet Branson

Now, it may sound like we're bestowing a huge accolade on *Ratchet & Clank* by placing it on a mascot's pedestal. Which we are, but it's also a roundabout way of preparing you for the fact that this is far from a reinvention of the series – this is a confident revitalisation, sure, but it operates on a template that will be very familiar to long-standing *Ratchet & Clank* devotees. It's a third-person shooter that

"A dazzling, multi-colour mushroom cloud of a shooter"



Polis state As the game opens, Metropolis is being ravaged by the Cragmite attack forces, an invasion that offers little for you to do but survive and escape while drinking in the epic splendour.

"This is a truly stunning game to see in motion"

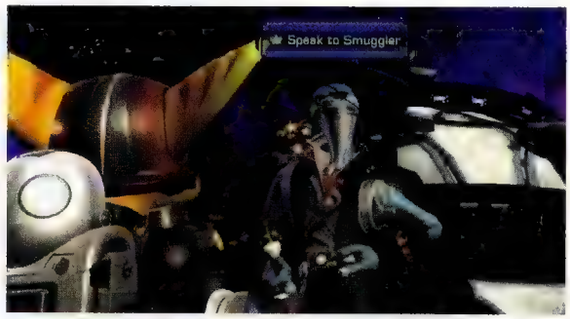
has you travelling between an entire solar system of planets in a relatively straight line dictated by the plot, with myriad minigames and sub-quests to get stuck into or return to as you wish. Ratchet's armoury and backpack of gadgets expands with each new stage visited (although, the levels are far larger this time around, and the only loading screens are those you'll see when skipping from planet to planet).

There's no multi-player mode, either, so it's not an absolutely complete package, but we'd rather Insomniac produced a single-player campaign that excelled, rather one that skimped in order to include Deathmatch scrapping.

Colour like no other

Don't be getting the wrong idea. *Tools Of Destruction* is far from lazy, and it's a much more preferable treatment than the experimental, overly combat-obsessed cul-de-sac that was *Ratchet: Gladiator*, the final PS2 game in the series. When we say that this is a PS3-ification of *Ratchet & Clank 3* (arguably the franchise's best outing), we mean it in the best way possible. All the vibrancy that Insomniac forgot to put into *Resistance:* was obviously held back for this... hook it up with a good HD display, and get ready for some laser eye surgery. It's a truly stunning game to see in motion, full of crisp, glorious hues and levels that are almost needlessly packed with rich ambient detail.

Goldfinder **Gold bolts are tricky to find, but gather enough and you can start unlocking new skins, including a bunch of enemy forms for Ratchet.**



Smuggler's run This shady fella will buy your Leviathan Souls off you, for a coupla thousand bolts each.

MotorStorm and *Heavenly Sword* may very well offer some graphical finery, but *Tools Of Destruction* has already moved things on in terms of sumptuous solidity and a luxuriant colour. From a panoramic prehistoric planet populated by enormous dinos to a journey within the electric guts of a supercomputer... it's like Insomniac has unearthed

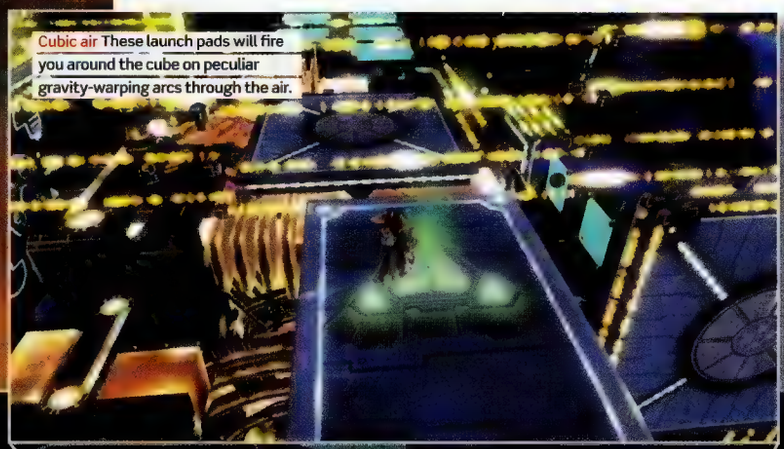
Ratchet & Clank

"It's like Insomniac unearthed several reds and blues the world hasn't seen"

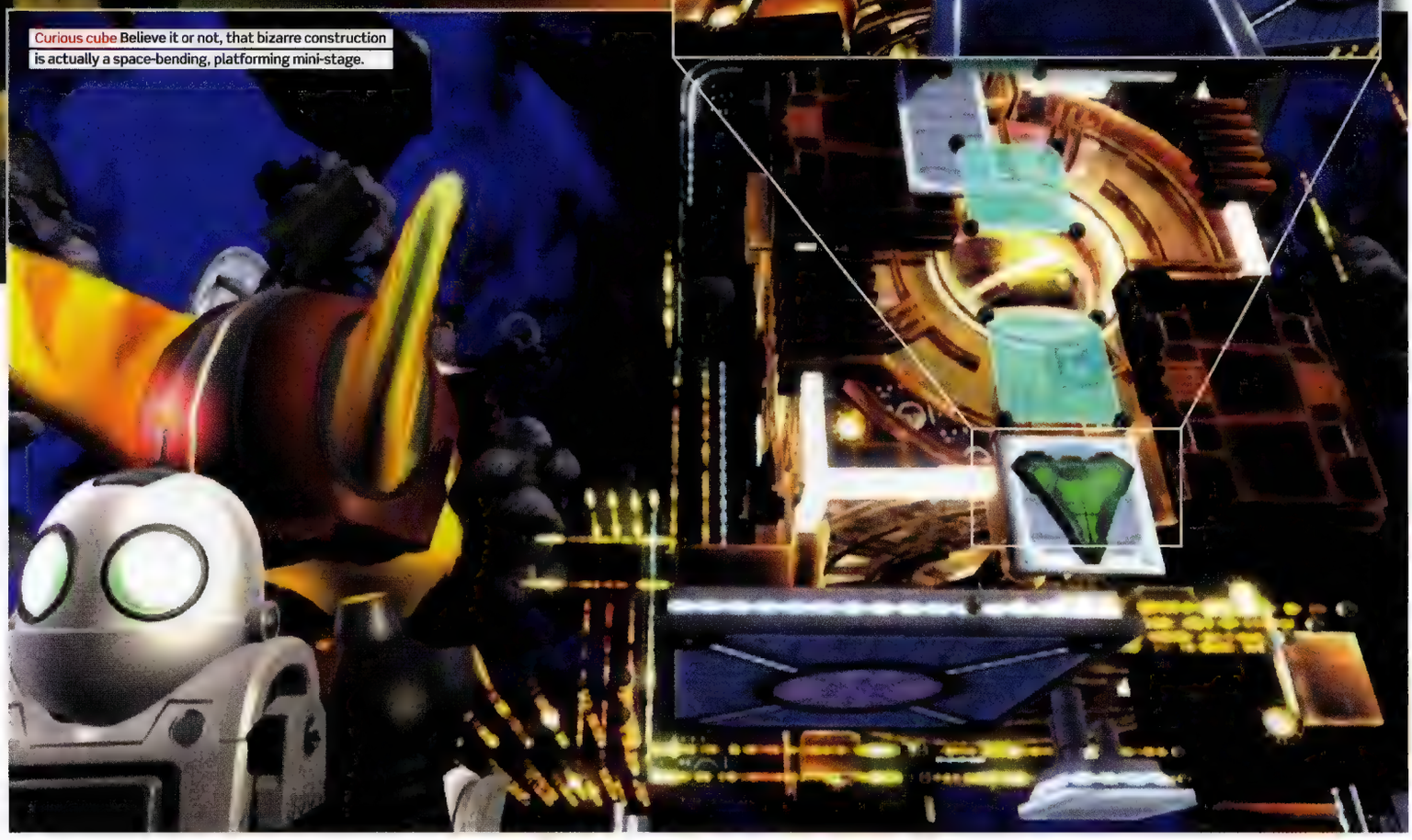
Five alive Every weapon evolves as it's used. When one hits its fifth 'level', it gains a new power – the Reaper shotgun, for example, ends up being able to freeze enemies.

several new shades of red, blue and green the rest of the world hadn't noticed yet.

Don't let the loud, brash tones of the visuals fool you: Insomniac's role as a master gunsmith is further cemented with *Tools Of Destruction*, whose arsenal varies from the silly to the brutal, but always keeps up a flurry of exciting carnage. As your weapons improve and the enemies toughen, the screen starts to turn into a searing lightshow of explosions and ordnance, on top of all that swanky background and environment detail. *Ratchet & Clank* games have long featured combat that sizzled and fizzled, but now you can almost smell the hi-def scorch as bullets whizz, boil and bounce their way around the place. It's as if the whole screen is your crosshair.



Cubic air These launch pads will fire you around the cube on peculiar gravity-warping arcs through the air.



Curious cube Believe it or not, that bizarre construction is actually a space-bending, platforming mini-stage.

Pop-up pirates

Arrrrr-mageddon

Stranded on a planet infested with hi-tech pirates? Here's how your [illegible] lombax copes with it

1

Winter blunderland Welcome to the pirate planet. You'll have to work your way across an armada of ships to push on through these cargo-stealing robots.

2

Hide park Some pirates pack heavy shields, so you'd best whip out the electric Ravager melee weapon, or toss some Plasma Beasts behind them to do your dirty work for you.

5

Massive damage You'll face several of these thunderous mechs throughout the stage, who fire exploding cannonballs. Be careful – those rounds can bounce off walls and catch you unawares.

"A rollercoaster of blockbuster moments"

3

Boing boom A new weapon – Death Springs – are a handful of coils that can be tossed onto the floor. They'll sproing around the place until they find a target to stick to, and detonate.

4

Downhill ski As with all *Ratchet* games, you'll be doing plenty of sliding along rails while leaping to dodge hazards – never too tricky, but they often offer a nice speedy fly-by view of the level.

Skill 'n' cross-bones

Every stage has a handful of 'Skill Points' to earn by completing cryptic tasks. Collecting these allows you to unlock a variety of cheats.

The game's story, however, is largely as much of a muchness as you'll have come to expect, as Ratchet and Clank set out to quash the Cragmite menace, whose despotic emperor has decreed a fatwa on the titular lombax. Captain Quark cowardly fumbles his way through alongside our heroes, while a bunch of new characters are introduced, who are, admittedly, a cut above past casts. The quality of the cut-scene production is superb, and the humour's as hit-and-miss as it's ever been, jumbling some cringeworthy for-the-kids wackiness in with some genuinely great one-liners, both daft and sharp.

Begin at the beginning

The opening stage isn't what we're used to, though. A rollercoaster of on-rails, blockbuster moments, it's there to remind you that Ratchet and Clank are now doing their thing on a whole new level of hardware, where expectations are higher than they've ever been. But it's just an intro – from there you've got to spend a few levels just snuggling into the controls and combat, and it's not until you start unlocking more weapons than you could possibly need that you start to see the game's action truly start to crackle. And remember: *Tools Of Destruction*, like its predecessors, features very little strategy. Most weapons

Richer lands Every stage is packed with peripheral detail, from bonus wildlife to buzzing space traffic filling the skies.

Shoot to thrill

Going, going, gun

Tools Of Destruction packs enough firepower to kill a black hole. Here's a sample of Ratchet's armoury...

TORNADO LAUNCHER

In other words: Mother Nature's wrath in the palm of your hand.
Best for: Taking out well-defended enemies.
Throw down a tornado, then use the pad to tilt it in whichever direction you'd like it to travel. It sucks up all enemies and any bits of debris in its path – a supremely satisfying attack, and one you can use to off enemies hiding behind cover. Or you could use it hoover up all the bolts laying around and drop them at your feet.

GROOVITRON

In other words: Disco ball distract-a-thon.
Best for: Moments of extreme peril.
Yep, it's that super-camp dance attack most folk already know about. Toss out a Groovitron grenade and all enemies are stunned into an impromptu boogie – it does them no harm, but leaves them open to whatever GBH you want to visit upon them. If your gun ammo is dry, now's the chance for your wrench to shine – you can batter each and every bopping bad guy to death. Snigger.

PLASMA BEASTS

In other words: Slimy attack dogs.
Best for: Shield-bearing enemies.
Throw one down, and a gooey green creature springs out, ready to pounce on a nearby foe, exploding on contact and wreaking serious damage. They're a bit stiff and slow in a pinch, but excellent against enemies carrying shields – throw a Plasma Beast behind them and your opponents will get a nasty surprise direct to their weak spots.

MR ZURKON

In other words: Psychopathic bot drone.
Best for: Back-up.
Zurkon is *R&C Future*'s answer to the Agents Of Death from previous games. Instead of a clutch of mini-bots, you've now got a single drone who'll bob by your side and add his firepower to yours. He's a bit of an evil bloodlust bastard, but is thankfully on your side. Best call on Mr Zurkon when you've got to concentrate on dodging, leaving the shooting to him.

VISICOPTER

In other words: Remote-control attack unit.
Best for: Scoping out dangerous areas.
Another Sixaxis weapon, tilting the pad lets you take command of a Visicopter – the face buttons will raise or lower it – which can be used to scout ahead. It can also fire small missiles, so it's ideal for defeating an enemy who's smugly sat on a mini-gun emplacement, by scooting round the back of him. Range is limited, but it's a nonetheless a cool 'n' dinky Wi-Fi wonder.

BUZZ BLADES

In other words: Flings razor-sharp discs.
Best for: Pretty much anything that needs SUPER KILLING.
Imagine a machine gun that spits scalpel-edged Frisbees that bounce off walls, each one whiter than a Hollywood smile, and leaving a swish, pearly trail in its wake. This is one of *Ratchet*'s messier weapons, a general purpose death-pumper that can bring a confrontation to a swift end – provided you don't mind losing tabs of just what the hell is taking place onscreen.

"Stuns all enemies into an impromptu boogie"

PREDATOR LAUNCHER

In other words: Rocket launcher.
Best for: Enemies that keep you on the move.
OK, so it's just a rocket launcher. But this, remember, is the world of *Ratchet & Clank*, so it's a *homing* rocket launcher, capable of swiftly locking onto multiple targets. Hold the fire button and beads are drawn on all nearby enemies. The rockets hover around you until you let go, resulting in a heavyweight fallout. You'll need to keep an eye on ammo, mind.

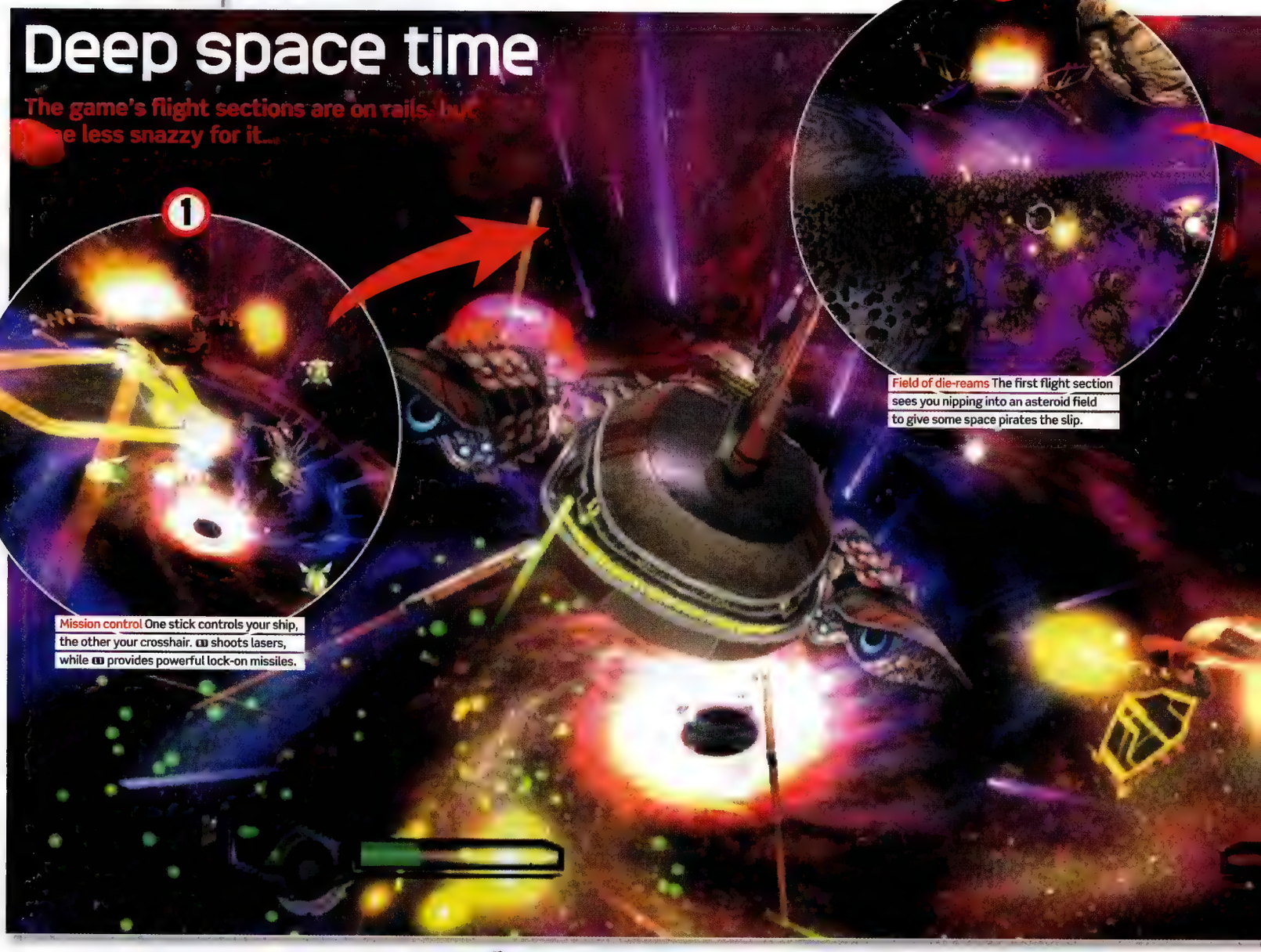
ROBOWINGS

In other words: Glider capability for Clank.
Best for: Swooping through the skies.
It's not all sci-fi gunpowder and head counts, y'know. These fancy wings attach to Clank and let Ratchet glide through the air. They can only be used at certain launch points, but there's one level in particular – Planet Kortog – where you've got freedom to roam the whole airspace, in order to reach new places and seek out some minor secrets and bonuses.

Ship's shape

Deep space time

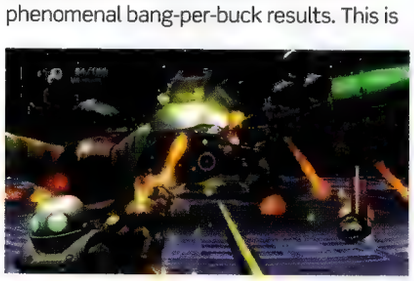
The game's flight sections are on rails, but [illegible] less snazzy for it...



Mission control One stick controls your ship, the other your crosshair. R1 shoots lasers, while R2 provides powerful lock-on missiles.

Field of die-reams The first flight section sees you nipping into an asteroid field to give some space pirates the slip.

suffice for most situations, and it's just down to you to start mixing up your favourites in order to turn the screen into a thermonuclear fireworks display. Sound dumb? It rarely feels that way, it's just that freedom to go nuts with guns that could only ever exist in videogames, and you'll grin with enormous satisfaction at the phenomenal bang-per-buck results. This is a piece of software that can throw a hell of a lot of chaos around, and it's all too happy to prove it to you.



Land shark It wouldn't be a *Ratchet* game without an arena-battle league featuring plenty of intense fights.

Device city

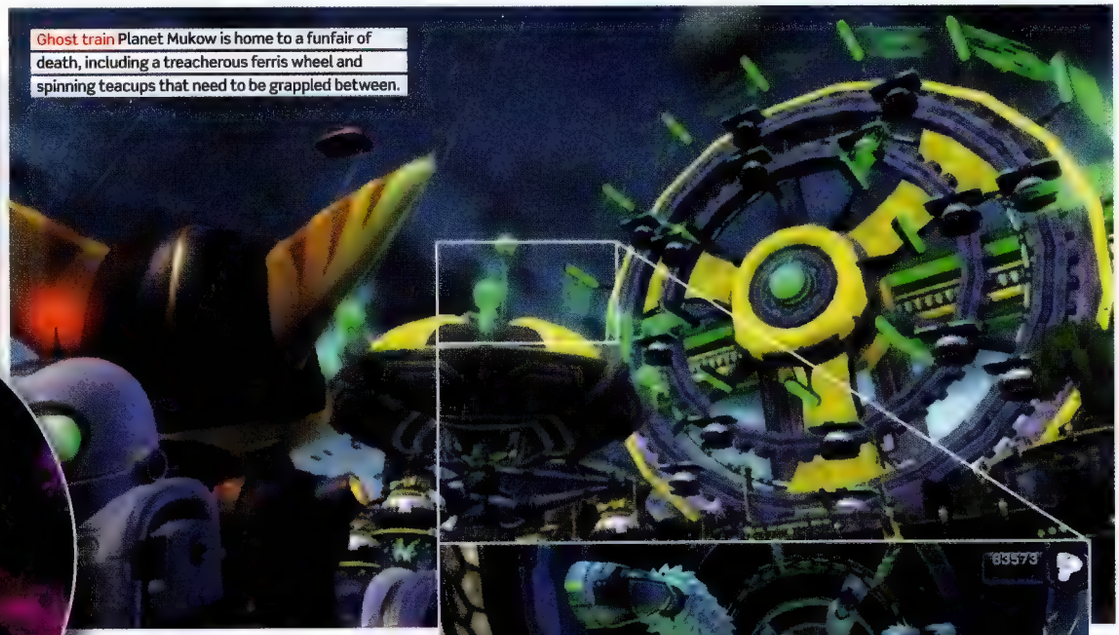
Ammo for powerful weapons such as the disco ball and turncoat bombs can't be found in crates, and have to be purchased from vendors.

Shoots you, sir

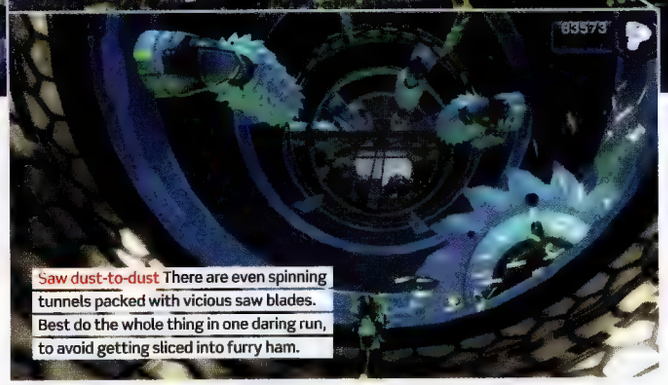
There are other slight changes worth mentioning. Raritanium – the currency used to unlock prescripted sets of upgrades for each weapon – can, much like the traditional nuts 'n' bolts collectibles, now be found in abundance around the game world. Larger, tougher enemies will drop 'Leviathan Souls', pick-ups that can be traded for extra bolts. And, of course, there's Sixaxis support, which is optional but far from irritating. By making motion-sensing novel and occasional, even the most cynical, anti-tilt grumbler will want to get wiggling. As well as being used for certain weapons (see 'Going, going, gun!'), you'll use it to guide Ratchet between traffic and missiles as he skydives, as well as directing a Geo Laser that can be used to carve open walls or slice down great racks of icicles that block your path.

Clank's puzzle sections, which have traditionally been a bit limp, have been enlivened. Instead of controlling dim, expendable mini-bots to do his bidding, Clank now hangs out with the Zoni (hoo!), a mysterious race of artificial beings that pop up here and there throughout the game to bless him with new powers. They'll also help him in his puzzling chores, where they expand his menu of simple commands (follow, attack etc.) to include interesting new features like levitation, the ability to slow time and the power to rebuild objects that have been destroyed. Which makes things more entertaining, even if these

Back for good At one point, Clank will man the rear turret in order to blast out those pirates in pursuit. Bless his bulbous metal conk.



Ghost train Planet Mukow is home to a funfair of death, including a treacherous ferris wheel and spinning teacups that need to be grappled between.

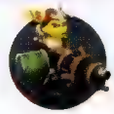


Saw dust-to-dust There are even spinning tunnels packed with vicious saw blades. Best do the whole thing in one daring run, to avoid getting sliced into furry ham.

Clank-only areas can't really ever rival the excellent destruction that you'll get to experience in the rest of the game.

Rail of a time

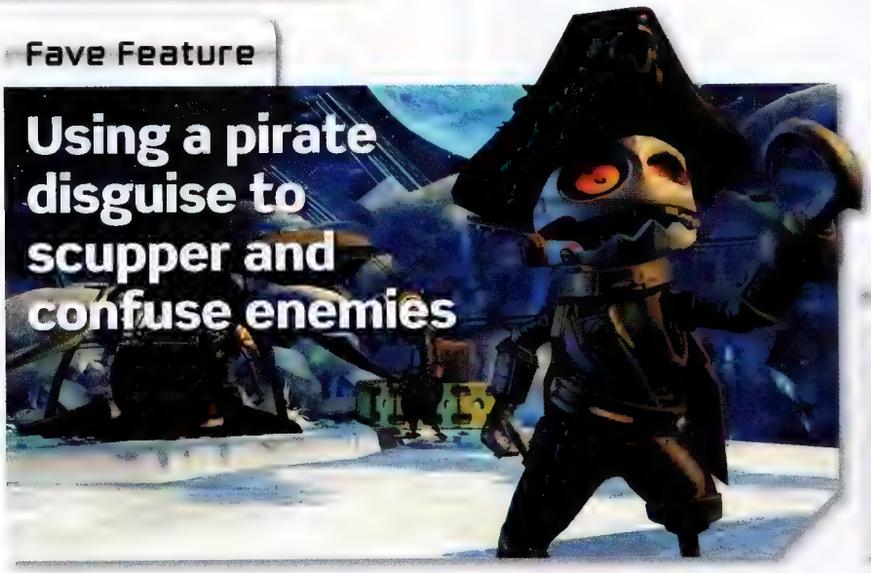
Also, this is the first console *Ratchet* to feature on-rails shooter sections (see 'Deep space time'), which are reminiscent of those that cropped up in the PSP version, *Ratchet: Size Matters*. They're really straightforward - shoot, dodge, shoot – but they *are* magnificent to look at. Once again, like the rest of *Tools Of Destruction*, they're just frantic and virtually obscene, with detail and the kind of colours we just don't see enough of in videogames. And once you've dived through a asteroid field on a rainbow-backdrop of nebulae while all kinds of crazy crap explodes in the background, we think you'll have a hard time disagreeing.



Me and my gel **Need to reach a high platform? The Gelatonator gun shoots out blobs of jelly that can be used as springboards.**

After the muffled, limited gameplay of *Lair* and *Heavenly Sword* comes a first-party title that will set your PS3 alight. Sure, it brazenly wears its heritage on its sleeve and chooses rejuvenation over innovation, but when it manages to hit the target in such an accomplished and enjoyable manner, we're not going to complain. Looking for quirky, experimental gaming that treads fresh frontiers? Stick with the PSN catalogue. Looking for an eye-opening, exclusive title that you won't be seeing anywhere else? Look no further. Never understood what all the fuss over *Ratchet* was about? *Tools Of Destruction* offers a vivid education that wallops the senses like a frozen house brick in a pillowcase. Welcome back, Ratchet and Clank. It's the homecoming that they, you and PS3 deserve. **Steve Bailey**

Fave Feature

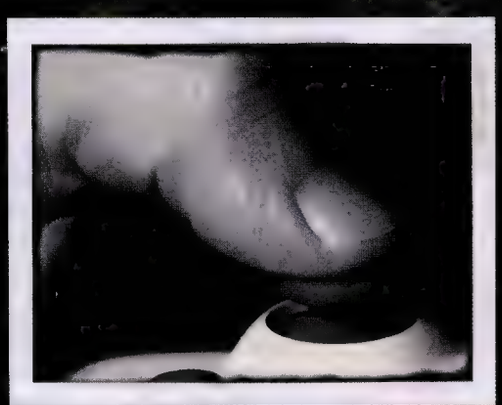


PSM3 Verdict

***Ratchet & Clank Future: ToD* contains...**
Endless visual jazz | No multi-player | Huge levels | Piles to unlock and upgrade

Overall Intense, beautiful and accessible. A return to the series' roots and a stellar game indeed.

93



"Who cares about the first-ever, intuitive right analogue stick and the realistic feel it gives? Your thumb. Because your thumb kills it."

Danny Way • Nosebone • San Vanelona

XBOX 360 LIVE

Release date: 21st September 2007

PLAYSTATION 3

Release date: 12th October 2007

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PS3

Pub Eidos Interactive | IO Interactive
Players 1-2 | Crime thriller
FYI It's IO's first non-*Hitman* game since *Freedom Fighters* in '03

ON THE DISC
More on *Kane & Lynch* on this month's disc

QUOTE
Developer insight

"This is a game about misfortune – every day and every level is worse for *Kane & Lynch* than the one before."

Jens Peter Kurup
Game Director, Io Interactive

Kane & Lynch Dead Men

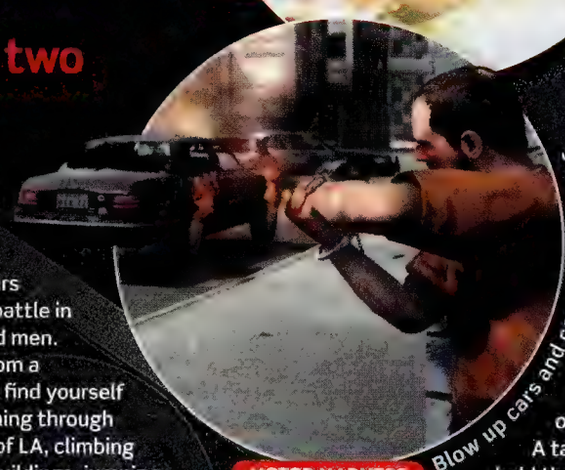
Exclusive playtest – we put the two madmen through their paces

After an exclusive hands-on with a number of new levels from *Kane & Lynch*, the latest shooter from Io Interactive, the great Danes behind the Hitman franchise, it's clear that it won't be an absolute, timeless classic. You're not going to be having breathless conversations down the pub about it in five years time. But it certainly knows how to do what it does very well indeed, with simple yet well thought out controls.

The heat is on from the get-go – after a mercifully brief intro showing you, playing as hardened criminal Kane, getting transferred from jail cell to death row, you're busted out of the transportation van by a masked gang. A straggly-haired psychotic (the crazed hillbilly Lynch) blasts your cuffs off with his shotgun, and you stagger towards the nearest alleyway, vision blurring nauseously as gunfire erupts all around. Look back just before you enter the passage and you'll see a squadron of police cars engaging in a pitched battle in the street with masked men. Grabbing a handgun from a downed lawman, you'll find yourself crouching low and running through the alleys and streets of LA, climbing fences, breaking into buildings, jumping off roofs and hiding in coffee shops, all the while taking pot shots at cops as they try to prevent your escape. Assault comes from every direction as the authorities try to keep you pinned down, with circling helicopters assisting the ground troops. Glass flies everywhere as you make your escape, popping and dropping, firing short sharp bursts from your assault rifle, to prevent recoil sending your bullets flying up into the air. Culminating in a huge shoot out in a donut shop, with a SWAT team coming at you from every direction, this is a sweaty encounter of the action kind

Kane is a hitman with a shady past

GUN 'EM DOWN



Blow up cars and cause huge chaos

MOTOR MADNESS

All on your squad

As in Io's oft overlooked *Freedom Fighters*, you'll frequently find yourself in control of a squad of men, able to issue orders effortlessly and cleanly. ◎ orders men to go to the spot you're looking at, ▢ gets them to run back to you, and △ orders them to attack your target. A tap of the button sends one man; hold the button and everyone under your command will follow your directions. Theoretically, you could clear huge chunks of the game without even firing a bullet yourself, although your squad will happily take care of business without your involvement. This ease of interface has been extended throughout the game. Fancy swapping your measly pistol for your squad mate's shotgun? Just stand

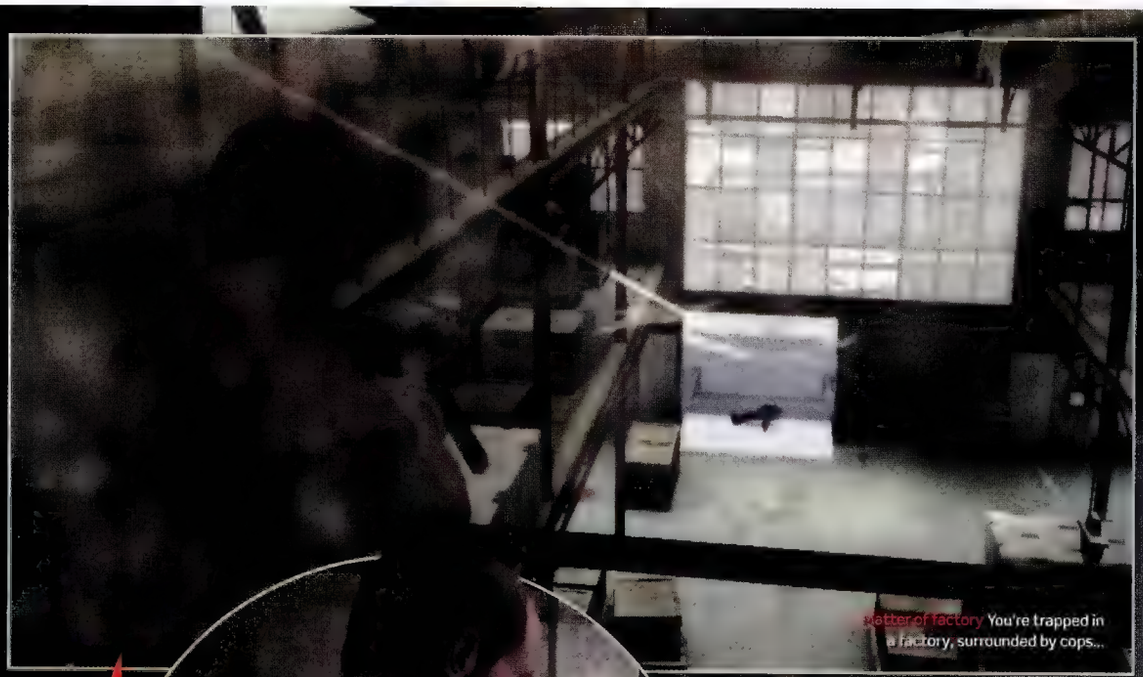
"Assault comes from every direction..."

INFLUENCES

Heat: The game

The movies that inspire *Kane & Lynch*

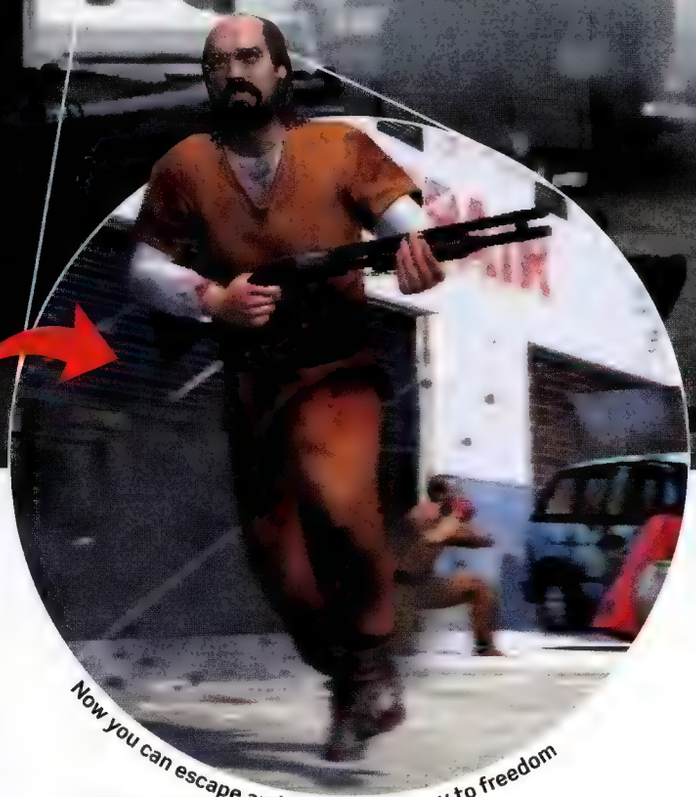
One of the key inspirations behind the game is the work of movie director Michael Mann. Famous for creating Miami Vice (both the TV series and the recent movie), Mann creates worlds that are as cool as they are violent, specialising in neon-lit nightmares. The nightclub sequence in *Kane & Lynch* is an obvious homage to Miami Vice, and the levels set in Tokyo and LA (which see our 'heroes' fighting pitched battles against the police in mid-day traffic) are pure Heat. The icing on the cake is Jesper Kyd's pulsing music score – a far cry from his lush orchestral work on the *Hitman* series, this is dirty threatening electronica at its best.



Matter of factory You're trapped in a factory, surrounded by cops...

Blasting your way out is, naturally, the only option...

It's a gas Shoot the gas tank to blow everything to smithereens. Most satisfying, that.



Now you can escape and leg it all the way to freedom

next to him, click and hold the right thumbstick and flip the left thumbstick twice to swap. It quickly becomes second nature. Got lost? Click the left stick and the small map on the bottom right enlarges. Continue to hold the stick, and the game will turn your character to face your next objective. It's helpful for finding targets when you're surrounded by allies, enemies and huge crowds (and we're talking hundreds if not thousands on certain stages – it's really impressive) of innocent passers-by.

Danger, high vault-age

By the time you get to the third level, everything's clicking into place. You're used to issuing commands and taking people down quickly – a good thing, as you'll be attempting to rob a high security bank. The missions are intricately planned. First you have to leap a wall to get into the car park

Lynch's madness: revealed

One of the key features of the Co-op mode (sadly K&L isn't online due to the huge amount of civilians running around in some levels) is the opportunity for a second player to take control of loony Lynch. Frequently throughout the game, Lynch experiences psychotic freakouts – in the two player game you'll get to see them through his eyes. In the bank level for example, the Lynch player will guard the lobby, taking down wave after wave of security guards while Kane robs the vault. Only when the Kane player rejoins him, he'll see Lynch shooting not cops, but innocent civilians. Freaky stuff.

CAN'T WAIT

Like this? Play these*...

Freedom Fighters
PS2 92%
Criminally ignored, this is an epic squad-based shooter. Invest in it.

The Suffering
PS2 86%
Also begins with its lead character banged up and insane. A gory horror game.

The Getaway: Black Monday
PS2 [redacted]
A criminal underworld game that's aged badly. Avoid this.

* Except The Getaway, of course

Scene it, done it **The cut-scenes are quite cinematic, although also on the brief side.**

of an adjacent building. Sending your team into cover, you sprint up to the door guard and incapacitate him with a close quarters takedown. You move up the building to the roof, where you leap over to the bank. Knockout gas is poured into the vents, and you pull on your balaclavas. The blag is on. An armoured van arrives below, so you and your crew rappel down to ground level and sneak into the car park behind it, casually shooting the driver as he emerges from the van. After a sweep to clean up security guards, your hacker gets you into the vault area, while Lynch runs into the main lobby of the bank to keep things calm. Or not, given his psychotic tendencies. The vault's located at the bottom of a vast flight of stairs. As you'd imagine, starting the vault hack brings waves of security guards running down the stairs. You have to take pot shots from cover, blind firing round the wall and occasionally running out to return tear gas canisters to their soon-to-be-tearful owners. After grabbing your stash from the vault, you work your way back to the lobby, only to find Lynch has turned it into a blood bank. You need to find cover and pick off snipers and cops before your extraction vehicle arrives, resulting in a huge free-for-all-firefight.

Looking old

Kane & Lynch isn't the best game on PS3 visually, with a slightly dated looking engine, but that's largely because the processing power is being spent on the on-screen chaos rather than awesomely pretty plant pots. It's certainly fun, but the controls need to be tweaked a bit to remove a slight deadzone on the right stick when aiming. What we've played so far is intense but a little repetitive – hopefully the as-yet-unseen levels set in Venezuelan shanty towns will offer more variety.

PSM3 Reckons

Not a game that'll suit up at Cape Canaveral and shoot for the stars – but it'll still be one of the better crime thrillers on PS3 this year.

PS3

Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar San Diego
Players TBA | **Genre** Driving
FYI Rockstar's ambitious street racer returns

ON THE DISC
See Midnight Club LA next month's disc

1 Los Angeles looks incredible

You might've seen Los Angeles in *True Crime* or *LA Rush*, but *MC:LA* best captures the city's extremes of rolling hills and urban hustle. Famous landmarks include the Sunset Strip, the Standard hotel and the Carney's Hot Dogs train. With a full 24 hour day/night cycle, you'll be able to soak up Santa Monica Pier by hazy daybreak. Beautiful.

Midnight Club: Los Angeles

Twist? Daylight, big online 'secret'

Andy Kelly

The Mazda RX8 looks as slick as it does in real life

A Lamborghini Gallardo and a Mitsubishi Lancer race it out

2 More licensed cars and bikes than ever

Confirmed motors include the Saleen S7, Ford GT, Mitsubishi Eclipse, Lamborghini Miura, Nissan 350Z and the Mazda RX-8 (above). Bikes? You've got a Kawasaki Ninja, a Ducati Monster and *loads* more.

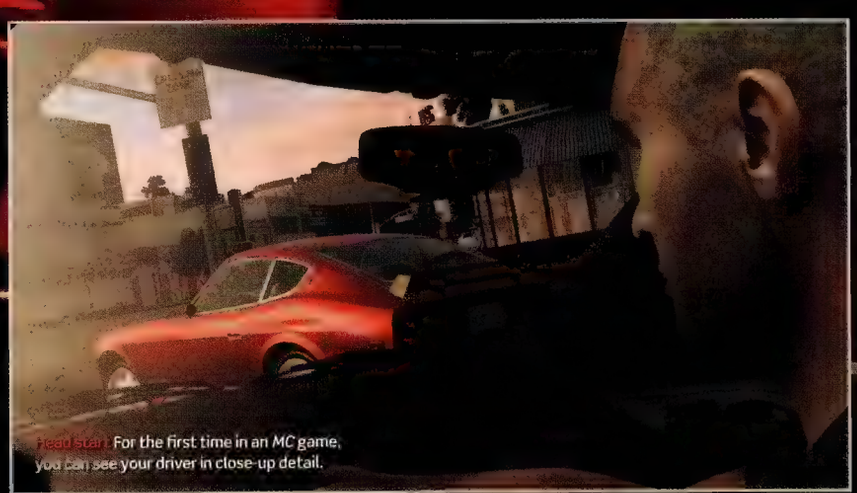
3 'Secret' online possibilities

Rockstar claim *MC:LA* is part of 'a bigger picture'. Our guess? Downloadable cities. Or a link with *GTA4* (both use the Rage graphics engine). Ears pricked up when we talked *Burnout Paradise* – so it could be a free-roaming world full of human racers.

Take a bike There will be lots of bikes as well as the usual array of cars.

4 The detail is insane

The detail's noteworthy - from the stunning 3D city map (zooming in real-time from satellite view to ground level), to gearstick reflections and billowing tyre smoke. All cars have full interiors, and you can see your driver's hands on the wheel in first-person mode. It's also absurdly shiny, with a rich juxtaposition between heat haze-licked daytime driving and neon-lit night time duels. Imagine the cars from a gaudy hyper-real rap video brought to life.



Head start For the first time in an *MC* game, you can see your driver in close-up detail.

5 Top soundtrack

The game has a predictably hip soundtrack, with songs by, among others, German electro wizards Digitalism and Blighty's own Bloc Party.

PSM3 Reckons

Surprisingly impressive – with ultra-shiny, chunky cars and blistering races. We hope 'secret' online mode doesn't disappoint.

PS3

Pub Touchstone | **Dev** Propaganda
Players 1-16 | **Genre** FPS
FYI Dino-blasting with a next-gen sheen

ON THE DISC
See more of *Turok* on a disc soon

Turok

Jurassic? No, the AI's great...

Dave Meikleham

Turok isn't so much a person, as a genetic legacy – that's why our favourite dinosaur hunter has changed since we saw him in *Turok Evolution*. With new developers Propaganda at the helm, Turok has been transformed from a proud Native American warrior to a grizzled, no-nonsense marine who must lead his team of Special Forces blokes to hunt down his old mentor – and nasty war criminal – Roland Kane. With his new moves, new weapons and a new nemesis, you might fear Turok has lost the essence of what made his earlier games a success – namely, dinosaurs. Until you find your head halfway down a raptor's oesophagus, and – oddly – it's almost a *relief* to be back.

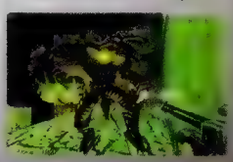
The levels we're playing hint at an FPS with a moody atmosphere, impressive AI and some startling prehistoric

"The dinosaurs can be lured into attacking enemy soldiers"

EVOLUTION

The history of *Turok*

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter
N64 1997
An N64 launch title that impressed with its graphics and some inventive weapons.



Turok 2: Seeds of Evil
N64 1998
Definitely the best game in the series with tighter levels and terrific weapons.

Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion
N64
The series lost its way and the focus was changed from dinos to – gnngh – cyborgs.

Turok: Evolution
PS2
PS2 update that failed to impress, with some poor on-rails flying sections tacked on.

Feeling a bit dino-sore

The stars of the show are undoubtedly the array of dinosaurs that populate Turok's world, from lumbering T-Rexes to speedy velociraptors. Get jumped on by the latter and it triggers a third-person minigame where you have to frantically hit the shoulder buttons. Succeed and you'll be treated to a gory sequence where Turok proceeds to stab Mr Raptor in his prehistoric hide. Fail to react quickly enough and you're dino dinner.

pests. The latter is definitely *Turok*'s standout feature, with dinosaurs that look like they've been ripped straight from the celluloid of Jurassic Park.

Compared to most forthcoming PS3 shooters, it looks like *Turok*'s firefights will have a tactical edge. This is mainly thanks to the dinosaurs themselves, who can be lured into attacking enemy soldiers. At one point, we scaled a power plant in the middle of the jungle, sniped some raptor eggs in the gorge below us with a bow, and then sat back and watched as the enraged mother came storming out, eating two nearby soldiers in a blind maternal rage. You can also tag enemy soldiers with the flare attachment on Turok's shotgun, which catches the attention of any dinos in the area.

Velociraptors can take a lot of damage, so it's usually best to give them a wide berth.

Do you think he saurus?

The intelligence of Kane's soldiers also makes the fights in Turok pretty involving. Enemies will regularly use cover effectively, will flank you at every opportunity and will even radio their team-mates with your location if you let them get away. Thankfully, Turok can use the long grass that sprouts all over the planet's steamy jungles to avoid being spotted. Sneaking up on enemies undetected also gives you the chance to use Turok's stealth kills, viewed from a third-person perspective to show off your brutal array of close combat moves.

Given *Turok*'s chequered past, we're surprisingly impressed by the series' confident next-gen evolution. More soon.

PSM3 Reckons

With impressive AI and exciting dino and stealth sections, this will hopefully capture the spirit of the first two *Turok* games. Promising.

ETA SPRING 2008

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Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

PS3 games missing, presumed dead...

LETTER

I bought my PS3 a couple of months ago and, like many people, I'm disappointed by the lack of decent games available. I know there's a lot of good stuff coming out in the future but it's pretty bleak at the moment – and what's worse is that stores don't even seem to be making the most of what they do have. I have

"Retailers just aren't stocking many PS3s"

some credit on a GAME gift card, so off I went to my local store to pick up a couple of games I had read up on. It took me a while to find *any* PS3 games at all. They were tucked away in a single bay right at the back of the shop like some kind of dirty secret. Neither of the games I wanted were in stock. In fact, all they had were those currently in the top 10 and a few others.

I couldn't find a single PS3 game in Smiths either, Woolies had a cardboard stand with about half a dozen titles and everywhere else was even worse. There were huge displays for other consoles, and while it's fair to say that retailers haven't got a lot to play with, it seems odd that they're not even stocking the few good games that are already out. If I was shopping for a new console I wouldn't buy a PS3 based on what I saw. Come on Sony, we've all saved up and bought your new toy, so pull your fingers out, promote your system properly and make sure we can all pick up PS3's handful of really great games.

Chris McStea, email

With only about 350,000 or so PS3's in the UK (there are 10m+ PS2's), large retailers aren't currently prepared to sacrifice shelf space on decent, but niche titles like *Oblivion*, when it could be used to, say, stock larger quantities of sure-selling Xbox 360 titles like *MOH: Airborne* – often incentivised by promo support from megabucks EA. Either check out an independent games store, or wait a few weeks until PS3's real AAA games like *Ratchet* kick off in a flurry of TV, retail and print ad activity.

Lost and found The best games are often dwarfed by those with huge marketing budgets, so can be hard to find.

Old school

I am an old-aged pensioner who has never had much time to play computer games. But now I have lots of time on my hands so I bought your splendid magazine, issue 91, to find out what I should know before buying a PlayStation 3 games console.

You certainly convinced me that the PS3 is for me. I toddled down to the games shop, walking stick and wife in hand, to buy one. Being the school holidays the shop was full of shouting children, some happy, others disappointed at being told that they'll have to wait for Christmas. We were just about to leave the shop for a quieter day when a man in a suit asked if he could help us. I asked him if the PS3 was guaranteed for a full year as we intended to purchase one.

Help the aged Are there any other 'wiser' gamers out there? Write in.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

I hate my parents.
Daniel, MySpace
Now, now. If it wasn't for your parents you wouldn't be here on this glorious Earth. Oh, wait, is that why you hate them? Sorry.

Issue 92's Stick Man Challenge shows the killing of the Meat King from level two in *Hitman Contracts*, while he eats a chicken.
James Nelms, email
Good work, James. But we can't send you a prize, because you didn't tell us your address. Oops.

PSNMail

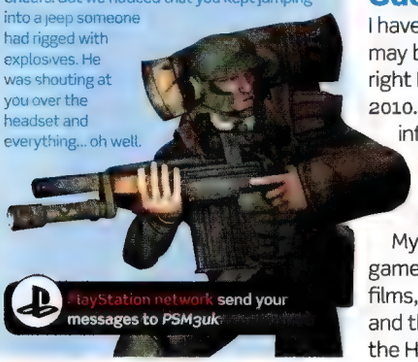
Our PS3 username is PSM3uk. Send us a message. Please

Pigging out
Is *Sega Rally* as good as *MotorStorm*? **psw321**
Nope.

Putting the boot in
Nooo! *FIFA* is gay. Long live *PES*! Traitors. I never thought I'd see the day. I thought you were faithful *PES* lovers! **billo2310**
More than one of you saw that we were playing *FIFA* the other day (via the PS3 online Friends list), but you have to understand that we play EVERY game, even if we hate it. It's our *job*.

Pigging out
Spider pig, spider pig, does whatever a spider can do. **richardce**
Just one of six hundred 'insightful' messages sent to us by richardce. We're not answering your questions because whenever we go to answer, you've sent five more. Leave us be.

Look who's Hawking
You were great on *Warhawk* today. **Vegito70**
Cheers. But we noticed that you kept jumping into a jeep someone had rigged with explosives. He was shouting at you over the headset and everything... oh well.



PlayStation network send your messages to PSM3uk

Racer riot Dave reckons *Ridge Racer*'s a load of old bum, and that *Def Jam*'s better. He's mental, clearly.

Welcome to the world of PS3, Derek. As crap '90s R&B group Pretty Ricky once crooned, "Age ain't nothin' but a number." We'd love to hear what games you're interested in, too. Write back.

Guessing game

I have a prediction about a game that may be released in the future. If I am right I estimate it to be out in about 2010. Anyway, my prediction has been influenced by the release of a series of films, and the *Lego Star Wars*, *Batman* and *Indiana Jones* games announced.

My prediction is a *Lego Harry Potter* game. Seeing as there will be seven films, it will make quite a long game and there are many people that like the Harry Potter films and books, so it will make a lot of money.

But the only snag in this prediction is the developers. As EA make the *Harry Potter* games and Traveller's Tales make the *Lego* games, it may never happen. I hope it does, however, as I – as well as many millions more – would buy it, as the previous *Lego* games have been great and the Harry Potter films haven't been bad either.
Daniel Squirrell, email

Warner Bros, who own Potter, but 'lease' him to EA, are looking to publish their own games – but could employ third-party developer Traveller's Tales to make it. So it's still a possibility.

Happy customer

After years and years of bank charges, mainly caused by me going in the red all the time from buying PS2 games, I saw a story in my local newspaper with information on how to claim them back. And I did, earning over a grand in the process. Brilliant.

I immediately went to Argos and paid £398 for a PS3 with two controllers and two games – *Ridge Racer* and *MotorStorm*. I took my lovely shiny PS3 home (after nearly breaking my back carrying it upstairs), took it out of the box and I was like a young boy on Christmas morning.

Then I put *Ridge Racer* on and... it "Is it for yourself?" The manager said, a puzzled look on his face. I replied, "Yes" He replied, with a look of amazement on his face, "Oh, good for you!" I thought to myself, are the children looking at us in envy? Or do they just think that we are a couple of immature old fogies? This is where I told a little lie. I told the shop manager that my doctor had recommended that a games machine would help my coordination by increasing the functioning of the alpa-butiric acid in my brain, helping to reconnect any broken synapses so improving my reflexes. After that he was less condescending and pointed to the Wii. I said, "No thank you, it's my brain that needs the exercise! One walking stick is enough."

No way are my grandchildren going to get their grubby hands on my new PS3. They'll have to wait for Christmas.
Derek, email

Wizard's sleeve We're not mad for Potts, but we'd play a *Lego Harry Potter* game gladly if one ever came out.

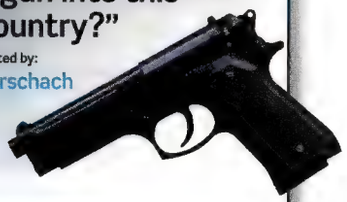
I would like ask if doesn't know something about it he should PSM3 was to have been and in CZ?

GT mastr, email
We've read this ten times and we still don't know what it's supposed to mean...

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"How do you get a gun into this country?"
Posted by: Rorschach



"Rich got first post. Let's burn him with a lit cigarette."
Posted by: Cheese

'Best' of the Rest

Elsewhere, MGS2010 talks about the PSM3 podcast. "When you said 'special guest' I was expecting someone from Sony or something, not a freelancer." Us too, *MGS*. Us too. T12AV15 stuck his oar in too. "I don't think it was the funniest podcast, but it was still ace." Well, thanks. We think.

We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.

Your Space

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best *Splinter Cell: 1, 2* or *Double Agent?*

Next Month Best *Singstar: Rocks, Popworld or Anthems?*

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

was CRAP! You might think I'm crazy, but I traded it in for £25 and put the rest towards *Def Jam: Icon*. *Icon* is great, but I can see why it got negative reviews. After a while fighting seemed like a chore and all I wanted to see was the cut-scenes.

Then I put *MotorStorm* on. I came 13th in my first race, but it was brilliant. But there's one problem – where's the two-player mode? I've just moved into a new home with my wife and baby, and all I hear all day is crying and screaming and whining – but enough of my missus. Anyway, to take a break from the wailing I thought I'd invite my brother over to play against me so I could show him how great the PS3 is and how crap Xbox is in comparison. But it was boring. Watching someone playing by themselves is really dull.

But anyway, thanks to the bank for giving me back my charges, and letting me finally afford a PS3. Those charges were more like a savings account.

Dave Cantliffe, Manchester

Good work, Dave. Glad to hear you're enjoying your PS3. We're even happier you've spent the bank's money on games you mostly don't like. Take that.

Solid Eye for detail

Whilst treading through all the content on October issue's DVD, I made a pretty cool new discovery (unless someone else did it already). There are a few *MGS4* images on Side B, and on the one with the close-up of Vamp and Raiden, I noticed a little label on one of Raiden's exoskeleton face panels. Zooming in a little, I was surprised to read the words, "CAUTION! Dual Solid Eye System".

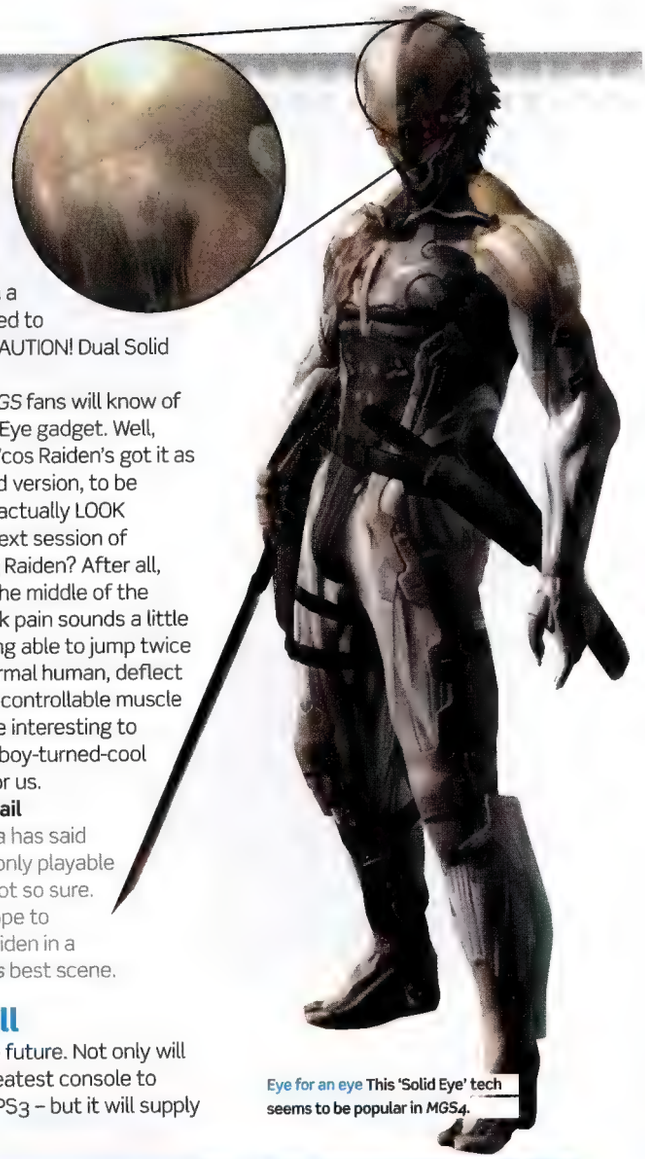
Now, all of us *MGS* fans will know of Snake's new Solid Eye gadget. Well, step aside Snake, 'cos Raiden's got it as well – an enhanced version, to be precise. Could we actually LOOK FORWARD to our next session of controlling Cyborg Raiden? After all, having to stop in the middle of the game to treat back pain sounds a little less cool than being able to jump twice the height of a normal human, deflect knives and have a controllable muscle suit. It really will be interesting to see what the ladyboy-turned-cool guy has in store for us.

Ryan Thomas, email

Although Kojima has said Snake will be the only playable character, we're not so sure. Worst case, we hope to fight alongside Raiden in a reversal of *MGS2's* best scene.

Shoot to kill

I can't wait for the future. Not only will it bring me the greatest console to roam the earth – PS3 – but it will supply



Eye for an eye This 'Solid Eye' tech seems to be popular in *MGS4*.

Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

In this month's magazine you gave away some wallpapers for the PS3 – how do I set them as wallpapers? All I seem to be able to do is view the pictures. I cannot find an option to set them as wallpapers.

Nick Gillon, Manchester

"Reet, what ye have to do here is download the latest firmware fer yer PS3 off t'internet. When yer have, select the image under the 'photo' menu, open it then press Ⓐ. A 'set as wallpaper' option should have magically appeared."

Dear Ken

I am considering buying a PS3 in France or America and I was wondering if the plug will fit into a UK socket...

James, email

"Nope, the plug won't fit, sonny. But you can buy a converter from most hardware stores, or from big chemists like Boots. Check the travel section."

Dear Ken

Can you make a PS account, and say that you live in America so that you can go on the American Playstation store, download all the good things that we do not have, and then play them on your normal British account? Eh?

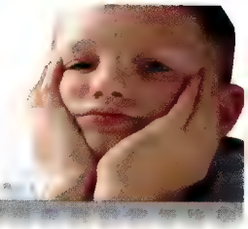
Chris Bateman, email

"Yes, you can. But you need an American credit card, or a Yank bank account. So chances are, ye'll jus' have te wait until whatever it is yer after comes oot over 'ere."

Socket to me You can buy universal plug converters for just a few quid.

Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Robo'.

"No way are my grandkids getting their hands on my PS3"
Derek email



me with many examples of the dominant genre of games – the FPS.

The FPS is my favourite of genre of games – not because I'm rubbish at the rest, but because I love guns and shooting, and what genre puts those two together better than the FPS?

In FPS's you get a feel for what it's like for a soldier, creating atmospheric surroundings with greatly produced sounds, making you want cry tears of fear. In the FPS there is no crappy turn-based combat or cameras with minds of their own – you *are* the camera, the soldier, the hero. The FPS also attracts many gamers. War lovers get *Medal Of Honor*. Dino lovers get *Turok*, geologists get *Fracture*, ufologists get *Blacksite: Area 51*, ghost hunters get *Jericho*, angry bosses get *Haze*, marine biologists get *Bioshock*, Hitler's friends get *Turning Point* and everyone gets *Killzone 2* and *Half-Life 2*. Want to hunt without harming animals? Go to war without getting shot? Want to travel in time, but too lazy to make the machine, or want to venture into space but are scared of aliens? Your saviour is here – the FPS!
Slayer, email

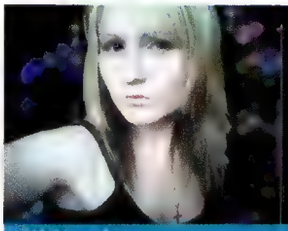
PS3 drowns in FPS's – with *Haze*, *Unreal*, *COD4*, *The Orange Box* and *MOH* to name a few. Still, we're a shade concerned that their dominance is stifling other genres, with risk-averse publishers' scared to approve 'edgy' concepts. Where's the next *Okami*?

First place FPS is easily the most popular genre after sports, but is it getting a bit stale?

UK myspace a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world



Kikkertje

ABOUT HER

"I'm messy, open, rash, irritable, weird, worrying, depressed, outgoing, vain and suspicious."

MOVIES

"David Lynch films, Bram Stoker's Dracula, Kung Fu Hustle, Girl interrupted, The Naked Gun."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Virtua Fighter 5, Resident Evil 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

She sounds like the most utterly complex person on the planet, but has time to enjoy The Naked Gun. We love a bit of the Les in action.

...Markwell for all

ABOUT HIM

"I am more powerful than all the armies of the world. I am more violent than violence, more deadly than death. I have destroyed more men than all the nation's wars."

TELEVISION

"Jackass, Creature Comforts, Futurama, Dirty Sanchez, Life on Mars, Rome – IT'S THE BEST SERIES EVER! – Family Guy, Transformers (don't laugh). Optimus Prime is my hero."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Transformers

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Because we love Transformers too. We like to fiddle with our Autobots every day. But that's really another topic.

Worf

ABOUT HIM

Formerly of the Starship Enterprise, then Deep Space Nine. I decided to quit the Federation to become a pimp.

INTERESTS

"Klingon Opera. Blood Wine. Growling. Tight fitting uniforms. Pimping. Bald men in authority. Finding convenient ways to get back to baldy Picard in a movie, even when I was supposed to be on another series. And yes, I really do think I'm Worf out of Star Trek."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Star Trek: Tactical Assault

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He's completely delusional. What's Klingon for 'seek mental care'?

Ruth

ABOUT HER

"I love reading PSM3. It's great."

MUSIC

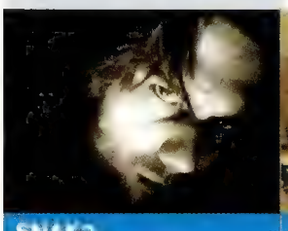
"In favourite order; Evanescence – her site is a shrine to them, Panic! At The Disco, Funeral For A Friend, Pink, Rolling Stones, Linkin Park, Justin Timberlake, Frank Sinatra, Missy Elliot, Avenge Sevenfold and David Bowie.

CURRENTLY PLAYING

FFXII, Burnout Dominator

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

She proves flattery will get you everywhere. Especially with us. We're a bit worried about her Evanescence obsession, though.



SNAK3

ABOUT HIM

"People get the impression I'm evil. Maybe because I look like Dracula."

WHO I'D LIKE TO MEE

"I would like to meet Satan... well. not really. All of the wrestlers of the WWE. Dracula, so we could compare notes and to give him some pointers on how to be more like me. And anyone out there with double O negative blood.

CURRENTLY PLAYING

God Of War 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We also look like vampires. *PES* has deprived us of so much sunlight.

Fantastical Anday

ABOUT HIM

"Face it, I'm never going to make it. Although I do speak Dutch."

HEROES

"I love Derren Brown. He needs no introduction. He is not fake. He is not a psychopath. He is however, the most entertaining man on the planet. If I ever get the chance to meet him I will fall on my knees and worship him."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guitar Hero, THUG2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

To show him that he will make it. And also to suggest he seeks professional help for his Derren lurve. Or buys knee patches.

Uncle Jimbo

ABOUT HIM

"I'm a soldier in the US Army and I'm currently posted in South Korea."

INTERESTS

"I like to visit museums, especially if it's a learning museum where you can go and touch things and learn about science. I like playing RPGs. And I really like to eat steak. I like it so raw that the cow moos when I cut into it."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Call Of Duty 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

To salute all gamers who serve their country. And we like to 'touch things' in our museum too. We're not allowed back now.

Meg

ABOUT HER

"I live in the sunniest, least crap place in Wales, Blaenavon. It's not as bad as people say. Well, OK it is."

INTERESTS

"I loved playing through *Killer7*, *Shadow Of The Colossus*, *Ico*, *Fahrenheit* and *Psychonauts*. I can't wait for *MGS4*, either."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Kingdom Hearts 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

She's got great taste in games and she wants to meet us more than John Lennon.

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome your unbiased choices

You What?

The idea of Tom Cruise playing Solid Snake in an *MGS* film is retarded. **StevieG, MySpace**
Damn straight. He's too small for one...
The *Hitman* movie looks like a load of old gay. **James, MySpace**
Too right. There's rumours there'll be a romance sub-plot. Agent 47 doesn't love anyone – he's a clone designed to kill. He doesn't give chocolates unless they're poison chocolates laced with arsenic.

The Darkness online is really crap and your review was right the actual game is also too short and the characters are all idiots with dead faces. **Tito, email**
Good review.
I saw a vid of people saying they are PSM3 on Youtube video website opening a PS3 was that you? **Archie, email**
Yes, that was us. Some interesting comments on that video, too. Mostly deeply insulting. Good old net.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show

Cel block H This was so good, Square Enix hired Level 5 to develop *Dragon Quest*.

Dark Chronicle

Deserved praise for Level 5's incredible village-building RPG epic

Reader Profile

Name **Sam Atkins**
Location **Merseyside**
Fave games ***Final Fantasy X, X-2 and XII. MGS 2 and 3.***
About me **I play games all the time, from any system. I write game reviews as a hobby and would like to do it as a job.**

Dark Chronicle follows the story of a boy named Maximillian. In true RPG fashion, he lives a normal life but is soon thrust into a journey to save the world. The plot is fantastic, but the real immersion comes with the characters. In each new area there are dozens of people to interact with, and all are voiced perfectly. The voices feel real, and even match the quality of games such as *Final Fantasy*. All of these elements make for an engrossing story that doesn't feel overblown.

The game is divided into three sections: towns, dungeons and Georama (see below). This gives the player a vast quantity of things to do. The battle system is one of the game's strong points, with a more refined and direct feel than the closest thing to it, *Kingdom Hearts*. With the intricate synthesis feature you can change your weapons to however you want them, and you can ride a customisable robot, too.

The most unique part of the game is the Georama system. This lets you create your own towns with objects – houses, trees and so on – found in dungeons. The game is presented in a cartoon style that suits the fun story. All the character models are incredibly expressive, which cannot normally be achieved in this style. There are loads of side quests too, including fishing and even fish racing. It will take you hours to see absolutely everything in the game.

As an RPG/adventure game, this is as good as it gets. With characters that are easy to connect with, and a world that feels alive. It features combat that is refined as it's going to get and doesn't drag. *Dark Chronicle* is undoubtedly the best of its genre on PS2. **Sam Atkins**

Reader Verdict

This'll make people forget all about Nintendo's boy in the green tunic. **95**

@ Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

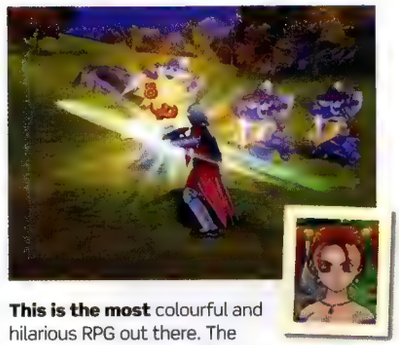
Final Fantasy X

From here on, the series changed forever

This was the first ever *Final Fantasy* game to use proper 3D backgrounds instead of pre-rendered flat ones, and also the first to have proper voice acting. This makes the game's world feel a lot more realistic and you care about the characters more than ever. The game is full of new features, including the Sphere Grid. You use this menu to select skills for your characters. The path you follow through the grid determines what battle style they'll have, like magic or defence. It's complicated at first but when you get used to it you can be quite creative. The cut-scenes are gorgeous and the story is really absorbing. The only bad thing is that there's no world map like in the old games, so you can only travel by clicking on a menu. Otherwise, it's a classic RPG. **Edward Mansell** **91**

Dragon Quest

Another RPG gets a glowing re-appraisal



This is the most colourful and hilarious RPG out there. The characters are all really funny and have a very British sense of humour. But the game is also genius because it's like an old school RPG, updated for modern times. It has old-fashioned, turn-based combat, but with an absolutely enormous world full of incredible creatures to battle and loads of side-quests to do. At first travelling the game's world takes ages on foot, but later you get a flying dragon and can explore it freely. The story is about a king and a princess who have been transformed by an evil jester, and you have to stop him and restore the king and his daughter. The cel-shaded graphics are some of the best I've ever seen. To finish this will take you hours and hours, so in that respect it's also very good value for money. **Tony Cranston** **92**

"My prediction is that there will be a Lego Harry Potter game"
Daniel Squirrell email

Metal Gear Acid 2

Even fans hate this cel-shaded oddity

What the hell is this? I bought this expecting an action-packed and exciting *Metal Gear* game, but instead I get some rubbish card thing. To attack, you select cards from a pile and then Snake does the corresponding action. Rubbish! Okay, so maybe I should have read the box or your review, but I was so excited about a *Metal Gear* game being on PSP I just grabbed it from the shelf and bought it. Boy, was that a mistake! It's also really hard. Sometimes you have rubbish cards and performing an action that'll actually help you is impossible. The only good thing is the amount of references to the *MGS* series and the cool visuals and music. But it's basically a complicated game and if you want fun and action you should get *Portable Ops* instead. **Liam Foster**

32

PSM3 You were so right!

"The controls are so terrible! They move like they're running through jam!"
Dodger, email

Transformers

We said "A lazy film tie-in, barely redeemed by some fan-pleasing extras."
PSM91 | Andy Kelly | 52%

"Give it a break! It's just silly fun like the film. You are all being too harsh."
Gunstar Hero, email

PSM3 You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone

Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

The Path Of Death by RedDevilDazzy

SKILL Some of *Ratchet & Clank 3*'s skill points were impossible to get. Here's one of the hardest, as earned by an internet man. His rambling narration's a bit mad however, so turn the sound off. http://tinyurl.com/2z3oy6

Home beta walkthrough by eXoOutsider

NICE If you weren't picked to be part of Sony's *Home* beta trial, don't worry. This video runs through pretty much everything it had to offer. Shame about that *awful* rock ballad soundtrack. http://tinyurl.com/2z6fa3

PlayStation 3 in Heroes by GtaUK

RAD Spoiler warning! If you haven't seen episode 18 of Heroes yet, skip forward 45 seconds to the scene where boy genius Micah and his potty mother play *Heavenly Sword* on a PlayStation 3. http://tinyurl.com/32rlp8

Korean *Street Fighter* by Nudevilking

BAD An oldie, but a goodie. Here's a South Korean television programme's version of *Street Fighter 2*. Some of the characters look ace, but Blanka is terrible. It's just a bloke in a green mask! http://tinyurl.com/yo4thr

@ Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a gem you want to share? Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about it.

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15
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PS3

Pub Sega | **Dev** Creative Assembly
Players 1 | **Genre** Action/strategy
FYI Hack 'n slash meets RTS meets Vikin

ON THE DISC
Viking will be on the disc next month

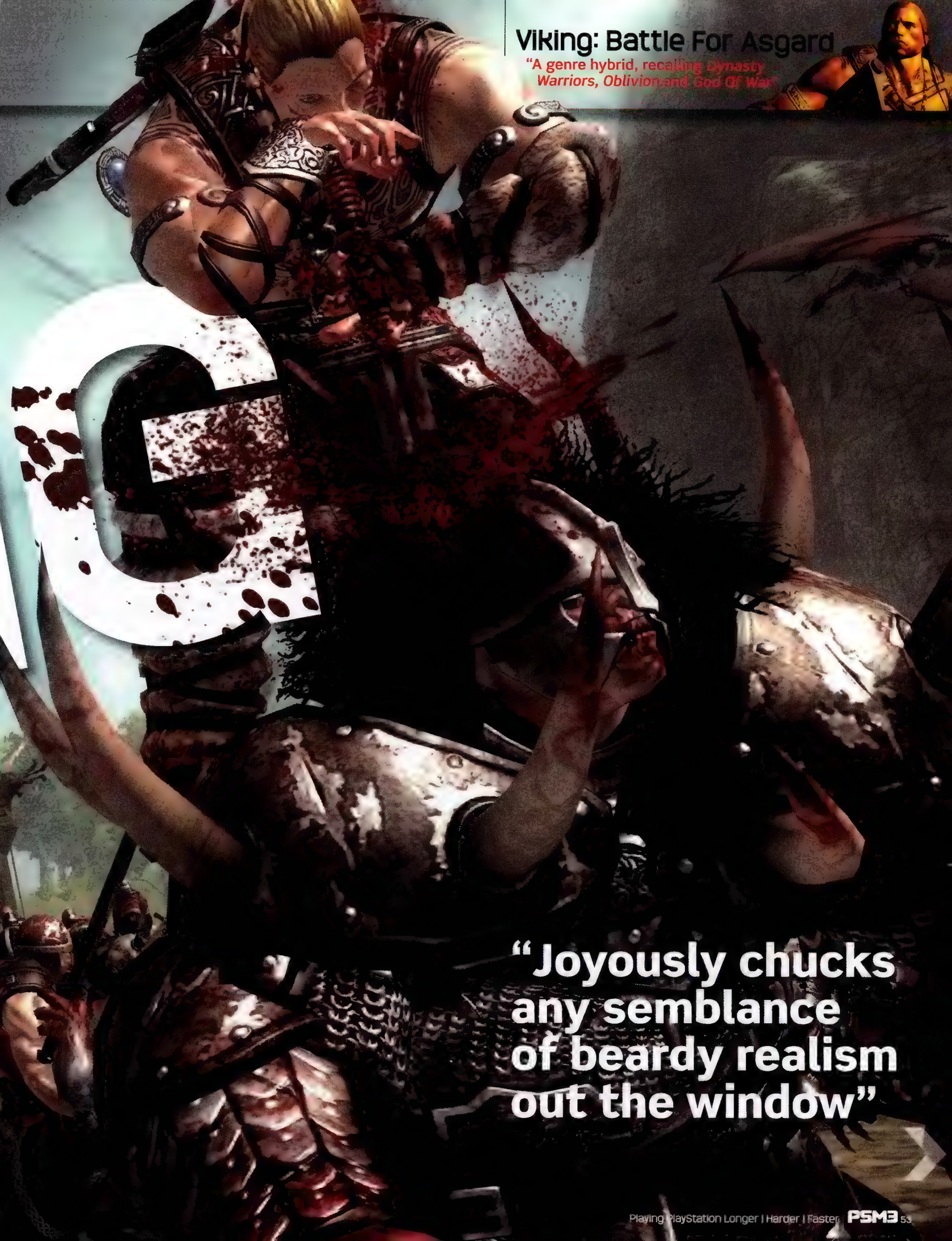
VIKING FOR A DAY

Sega's *Viking: Battle For Asgard* is a curious beast – a brutal button-masher spliced with cerebral battle sim. Take a look at next-gen's bloodiest battlefield...

Ker-unch. Shlop. The echo of shattered bone and slopping coils of intestine resonates around the Leipzig demo room, as the Creative Assembly's James Carey gleefully demonstrates the inventive ways you can slaughter a foe. Creative Assembly might be renowned for their 'historically accurate' Total War series on PC, but it's apparent that their new next-gen project, *Viking: Battle For Asgard*, joyously chucks any semblance of beardy realism out of the window in favour of fantastical, gory fun.

Token plot? Hel, boss lady of the Nordic underworld, has invaded Asgard with an army of undead vikings, and it's up to strapping hero Skarin – champion of the goddess Freya – to restore balance to the world. The events of *Viking* unfold over three islands (each a kilometre in real world terms), each of which our hero is able to roam about recruiting troops – before engaging the forces of evil in large-scale battles. Naturally, CA admit it'd be a folly to march right up to the game's final scraps 10 minutes into your adventure, but this is the sense of scale and freedom of choice the Sussex massive are striving for.

A real genre hybrid, this. There's a smattering of *Dynasty Warriors*' wild scale, but with infinitely more panache and rolling hills instead of pop-up-obscuring fog. The scale of Asgard and sense of autonomy recalls *Oblivion*; battlefield dynamics appear heavily influenced by the likes of *Braveheart* while the chunky, personality-packed character models and bleak sense of 'humour' might have been ripped straight from *Mark Of Kri* and *God Of War* respectively. Meanwhile, you'd do well to remember that each one of Skarin's solo excursions is intrinsically linked to the



Viking: Battle For Asgard

"A genre hybrid, recalling *Dynasty Warriors*, *Oblivion* and *God Of War*"

"Joyously chucks any semblance of beardy realism out the window"

outcome of climactic battles, whether it's purchasing a stouter sword from a smithy, freeing a posse of comrades to help bear arms or incapacitating an enemy outpost to shrink the ranks of their armies. Attempt to take on Hel's hordes unprepared and the future looks bleak. Put in some groundwork and the forces of light might prevail.

One of the miniature quests involves Skarin's attempt to shut down an enemy barracks. There appears to be a multitude of ways to do this – stealth being the most obvious. Instead of walking in sword drawn and taking on all comers, reconnaissance reveals a partially ruined wall that could be scaled. Once inside, we scuttle from cover to cover, eliminating the odd guard who, if alerted, might raise the alarm. Cunningly, stealth kills are inordinately powerful, giving Skarin an incentive to keep his head down whenever possible. Once a certain amount of assault criteria have been fulfilled, it's time to enter what Tom Clancy deems the 'Endwar' stage.

Can you feel the Norse?

As Skarin's forces plough their way through legions of undead grunts – with up to 1000 fighters on-screen – the sheer visceral abandon becomes apparent. Limbs are lopped off, bodies hewn in two, heads sail from shoulders... red ruin fills the screen as far as the eye can see. Intense one-on-one battles between soldiers flare all about as we survey the carnage from atop a hillock – each skirmish as real and desperate as the ones Skarin has fought himself. It's like finally being in the midst of one of *Total War*'s battles, and it's breathtaking.

To the naked eye, *Viking*'s combat resembles any of half a dozen other button mashers. Peer more closely and you'll uncover the concept of 'pips', tokens which accumulate through Skarin's repeated use of light attacks. These pips can be spent on heavy blows, which come in handy when you're faced with heavily armoured foes or those cowering behind shields. So, instead of simply hammering away on your Sixaxis and hoping for the best, you'll need to formulate strategies that exploit opponents' weakness to the full. It sounds simple – because it is – but it also adds a welcome layer of wily strategy to all that pad pounding.

While it's easy to get lost in the joyous carnage of battle, you'll need to remember that Skarin is a leader – and any general worth his salt is as adept at strategising as murderising. Keeping an eye out for potential threats, like behemoth Champions or crafty Shamen is a must. As your abilities develop, you'll also be able to summon magical attacks that paralyse the zombie hordes while respectively boosting the strength and morale of Skarin's mob, as well as awe-inspiring Dragon Strikes that – for instance – can target individual Champions with streams of hyper-hot magma. A real pay-off.

Regardless of your feelings about vikings, ogres or real-time-strategy, *Viking*'s visceral impact sweeps you away on a tide of blood and testosterone. Stay tuned for much more on Skarin's odyssey before its early 2008 release.

Grabbed by the Ghoulies Hel's forces are an ugly lot, but you'll also be fighting against human foes who have flocked to the cause of evil. Best just kill 'em all.

Blade runner Execution QTEs can help you build up pips, so don't be afraid to ramp up the style to go along with the button mashing, slicing and dicing.

Viking: Battle For Asgard

"It's like being in the midst of one of *Total War*'s battles, and it's breathtaking"

Going to pieces Don't expect *Viking* to play it safe with the censors – this is brutal.

PSM3 Reckons

It's a genre mish-mash, but with The Creative Assembly at the helm *Viking* has the body and soul to convert fantasy-genre naysayers. Next-gen limb lopping and mass scraps? Yes, please. The dwarfing scale alone made this the highlight of the Leipzig Games Show.

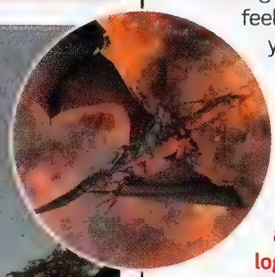
Q&A

James Carey,
Studio Manager

PSM3 corners Creative Assembly's James Carey in a dark corner

With *Viking*, do you think Creative Assembly has gone and created a whole new genre?

If you start thinking in genres you're limiting yourself to certain expectations. I know the team here at CA are keen to get away from those kinds of themes and instead develop mechanics that allow them to play the games they dream about. I certainly wouldn't describe the game by saying it's this genre or that. I'd say that it was a game that simply tries to capture what it feels like to be a warrior. How it feels to carve your way, blow by blow, through an army of assailants while your friends and allies fight and die by your side. That's the key I think; it's not just Skarin against the world, it's Skarin *and his army*.



You've done Samurais, Spartans, Romans and Barbarians – were Vikings the next logical continuation?

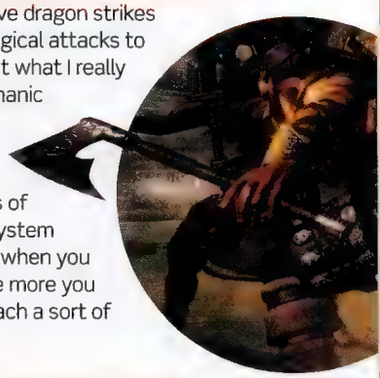
Vikings are clearly one of history's hardest races. This was a civilisation that pushed itself to extraordinary lengths, colonising remote parts of the world at a time when most people were still utterly in awe of the ocean. It's like the Vikings were swimming the Channel while the rest of the world could only manage the equivalent of rolling their jeans up for paddle at Bognor Regis.

In *Viking*, will we see PS3 being pushed in ways it mightn't necessarily have been pushed before?

Once we're past Alpha we can start playing with potential differences between the next-gen systems. There's a base level of features that have to be in place before we get to this point, though.

What's your personal highlight of the game so far?

I love calling in the massive dragon strikes and using the various magical attacks to take apart the Legion, but what I really like is just the basic mechanic underneath the combat. There's a sort of pure pleasure in mastering the actual nuts and bolts of fighting. It's the sort of system that feels easy to grasp when you first get hold of it but the more you play the more you approach a sort of mastery level.



Any chance we'll ever see *Total War* on PS3?

Next-gen offers some serious horsepower so it's certainly the case that *Total War* could be considered on PS3. It's not something we're working on though – we believe games like *Viking* can make our name on PS3 without relying on the popularity of *Total War*.

The Battle Of Caldberg

Viking's stand-out battle scene explained in five key steps...

Skarin The goddess Freya's blond, blue eyed boy and hero of the tale. Sports a sick line in tats.

1 Recruit an army

Skarin's hard, but a one-man army he isn't. He'll need to scour islands drumming up recruits for Asgard's cause. Whether it's freeing allied soldiers from gaol or emancipating a lumber mill from Hel's forces and thus acquiring access to siege engines, you'll have a wealth of ways to boost your chances.

2 Survey the battlefield

Once you've fulfilled your assault criteria and Skarin has raised some semblance of an army, it's time to engage in battle. Attacking from higher ground is always a boon, and since – as with *Total War* – you're given the option to pick your initial attack position before the two sides clash you'd be wise to study the field of war like a hawk.

Viking: Battle For Asgard

"It's all about possessing the tactical acumen to accompany the sheer brute force."

Dragon breath Well-placed Dragon Strikes are an integral part of a winning battle strategy...

5 Dragon time

The Dragon Strike is when Skarin summons a Wyrm to wreak havoc on the enemy forces. In this case, we've chosen to target chieftain Harbinger's fortress walls with a barrage of flame, leaving a breach for our joyous lads to flock through. But we could have taken out a Champion, a Shaman or perhaps even the well-defended left flank. Choices, choices...

4 Duel the champion

The champions are 'mini' bosses that need to be snuffed out to reduce troop damage and earn vital pips.

Spike out The freakishly large champions can devastate your troop numbers and morale.

Spell binding Shamen die easily but, conversely, are often well guarded. Exercise caution and rely on your sneaking skills to get in range...

3 Kill the Shaman

With up to 1,000 screaming Vikings hacking each other into meaty chunks it's not easy for generals to focus on tactics in the chaotic throng of battle. So you'd do well to focus your energies on their Shaman, who's resurrecting his undead warriors via streaks of magical lightning no sooner than your lads have killed them. Ergo, Skarin nips up a nearby knoll, plunges his blade through the evildoer's ribcage and weakens the opposition. *Viking*'s all about possessing the tactical acumen to accompany sheer brute force.

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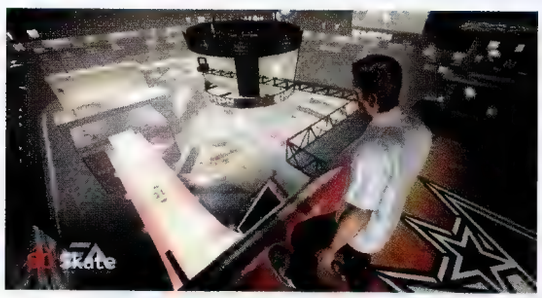
PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice



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"One of the oddest ever"

Folklore page 80

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29 **Rubbish**
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49 **Poor**
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69 **All right**
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84 **Good**
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89 **Superb**
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

90+ **Amazing**
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

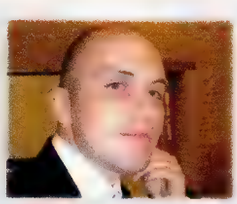
The PSM3 reviews team – available for weddings, bar mitzvahs and babysitting

Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, supplying massive show-off pics.
Playing *Skate:* "You're going to use the pic of me *skating*, right?"

Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, big American sandwiches.
Playing *MGS2:* "The long cut-scenes offer vital sarnie time."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, monochrome catalogue poses.
Playing *Final Fantasy 8:* "The best escape from my sadness."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, massive slabs of chocolate cake.
Playing *Everybody's Golf 5:* "I'm too full for strenuous games."



Joel Snape
Specialist in Beat-'em-ups, mens' tailoring.
Playing *Stranglehold:* "Stylish killing requires stylish suits."

Dave Meikleham
Specialist in Driving, that 'just woken up startled' look.
Playing *Sega Rally* "Och, ye wee eejit, ye dented mah bumper."

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

Pub EA | **Dev** EA Black Box
Price £39.99 | **Release** Oct 12
Multi-player 1-8 online

ON THE DISC
We'll have our best *Skate* runs on the disc next month
PS3/Latest

How tricks work

Skate's intuitive controls explained

Skate's flip tricks and jumps flow from sweeps of the right stick, not complex button presses like *Tony Hawk* – with up to 30 permutations, including Kickflips, Inward Heelflips and Varial Kickflips. The highest scoring, more intricate flips require almost brush-like subtle swirls, operating *within* the stick's central dead zone and outer ring. Combine right stick flips with left stick body movement to score big – then take it onto obstacles. Even the biggest moves score about 800 points in isolation, a far cry from *Tony Hawk*. Note the motions required for a trick / inward 360° Flip Christ Air below...

Step One Swirl the right stick as below for an Inward Flip – do it early to exploit the bump's lift.

Step Two As you're in mid-air hold the left stick sideways to start spinning – watch your timing.

L2 + ◎

Step Three Press L2 to grab your board (left handed), and quickly hold ◎ for a Christ Air.

Step Four Release the grab before you hit the ground and try to land at a smooth 180° angle. Perfect.

KNOW IT NOW

- Intuitive stick-based controls? ✓
- Friendly video editor and online sharing? ✓
- Huge open-world and endless opportunity? ✓
- Complex player editor and flatland tricks? ✗

Skate

EA's realistic skater soars above *Hawk* on its first attempt

Skate is a nightmare to review, but a joy to play. However gushing the description, you can't explain the *feeling* – the physical sensation of relief, exhilaration and pride – of nailing a perfect trick on your anguished 37th go. In *Hawk* games, you 'divine' complex moves into life via a rapid-fire test of memory and reactions, in *Skate* you caress your moves with direct analogue fluidity and grace. Put simply – it feels like skateboarding. On their first attempt, EA have crafted a game so naturalistic and sublime, that it practically invalidates one of the longest running franchises in console history.

PSM3 BUY IT

Skate succeeds because, rather than focus on the tick-list whims of 'consumers', the developers have made a game for themselves, with a simple goal: make it feel like skateboarding. And by creating an intuitive, rewarding control system, it democratizes the thrill of skating, without the pain of having to learn it for real, providing creativity, exploration, challenge, community and, well, the simple thrill of wheels click clacking along paving slabs, or the primal screech of a power slide.

Love skating? Buy this now. It's probably the most fun you'll have on PS3, and an antidote to the cartoon, Jackass-excess of *Tony Hawk*. No interest in skating? "I don't know anything apart from playing *Tony Hawk*," revealed a journo on an Xbox 360 mag, "but I really, really enjoy this". That said, his observation that *Skate*'s cast are 'nobodies' compared to *Tony Hawk* are erroneous, since EA have assembled an incredibly authentic, credible roster of real-life talent, including Danny Way, Mike Carroll, Colin McKay and Mark Gonzales.

Slick tricks

Controls are sublime, with ollies, flips and shove its assigned to the right stick, and movement to the left. To jump (ollie) you simply pull back on the right stick, and yank it forward – mirroring the real-life motion. Snap the stick clumsily down and up, and your skater will perform a small, sketchy leap. Perform a fluid, deeper, motion, and he'll jump with poise and grace. It's the key to *Skate*'s success – regardless of your understanding of real-life skate dynamics, few games give you such direct, or rewarding, control over your actions. Thanks to the, mostly, exemplary physics, it's possible to gauge when your timing's right or wrong by animation alone.

"Few games give you such control over your actions"

Full game map

SPOT BIBLE

Welcome to San Vanelona

It's easily the size of Liberty City, with obstacles to suit every type of skater...

Suburbs
SKATE PARK
FILMER GOALS
DUMP DIVER
THE GONZ
The Suburbs You start in the Community Centre tutorial area before skating to The Res – but return later on to meet The Gonz.
The Res
The Res Tighten your trucks – The Res features near-vertical narrow streets and lethal tight gaps.
Old Town Cobbled streets open into San Francisco-style hills – look for hidden bowls and parks.
Downtown The financial district teems with curved statues and banks begging to be skated – but watch the guards.
Downtown
Old Town

Skate

"You could skate for weeks and never see the same line twice"

Pause for effects You can pause the action at any time and watch/edit 30 seconds of footage – see the controls to your left.

Edit proof Colour filters? Daft. But there's only five (however good) camera angles – and no free-cam.

Cut above We'd advise trimming your clips to save time uploading. Avoid manic cuts, use slow-mo wisely and use your eight – admittedly big – hard drive slots sparingly.

Roll the right-stick back, and your character will crouch in synchrony, primed to jump. Hold the left-stick back, and he'll gingerly slide his wheels. Yank it and he'll slam into a 90° skid – the distance a result of your speed, the terrain and the hardness of your wheels. Pop onto a rail at too slow a speed, and you'll see your skater teeter, waving the appropriate arm to regain balance. Misjudge a jump and land inches before a ledge, and you'll slam your body, or head, forcefully into the concrete. No two slams are the same, and – despite the slightly floppy nature of the rag doll physics – you'll revel finding new ways to hurt your skater. There's even a pop-up skeleton menu after big slams, showing exactly where you've bust yourself.

Combine left and right stick moves for more complex tricks. For example, kickflip (right-stick down, then top left), then hold sideways on the left stick for a 360° flip. See that bump? Try the same move, but use the added height to add a grab (R2 or L2 for right/left hands). Now try *again*, but push faster (three taps of ⊗ or ○ is all you need to reach top speed), time your jump earlier (to maximize the trajectory of the bump) and add a tweak (hold R2 while pushing right stick) to maximize points. At any point, you can use your skill, timing and exploitation of physics to try something new. Ground a rail? Good – now use the bank above it to 540° laser flip into a blunt slide. Now try again, but shove it out...

Even in the relatively gentle Tutorial area, the Community Centre – where the PS Store demo is set – you could skate for weeks and never see the same line twice. Just type 'EA + *Skate* demo' into YouTube. Be honest – you never thought about wall riding the pillar, let alone flipping into it from the bank below. Unlike *Hawk*, where impressive runs are five million point, hyper-speed combo chains, the best things in *Skate* are often simple, but insanely creative. After landing a 720° melon out of a vicious bowl, you're just as likely to bail jumping 5cm onto a kerb. Like real life, *Skate* is a mixture of insane trickery, and comedic ineptitude. Try to grind a bench too fast, from the wrong angle and you'll eat concrete – alignment and timing is key, and you never 'snap' to rails like Hawk by simply holding a button.

Skate's learning curve mirrors reality so closely, a common complaint is that it

Custom sounds

There're 45 tunes from bands like Agent Orange, Motorhead, Nirvana, David Bowie and NWA – plus custom playlists.

Multi-player

How to 'own' spots online

Skate your favourite spots with 1-4 friends in Party Play – or head online

Multiplier Land a trick to build the multiplier, then chain moves before it ticks to zero for combos.

Pro faced Beat skaters Career mode goals to use them in Freeskate and Party Play, including Danny Way, P-Rod, Rob Dyrdek, Chris Haslam, The Gonz and Colin McKay.

Spot of bother 'Own' spots in Career mode to unlock them for Party Play, with six game modes like slalom races, best trick, Skate (Horse) and Jam (a free-for-all).

lacks variety. Rubbish – you just need to rewire your expectations. There's a host of 'hidden' flip tricks on the right stick – like 360° flips, laser flips, inside heelflips etc – that require boggling co-ordination. Unlike Hawk's 'signature' moves – e.g. tap three buttons to do *Tony Hawk*'s epic 900° – these are more like *writing* your signature, with the right stick in place of the pen.

In one later mission we were asked to Nollie 360° flip into a grind, leaping a set of ten steps. The physical demand of the trick – like writing a perfect hand written 'p' in seamless motion – is so high, we were only landing one in ten when under no pressure on the open street, let alone under spilt second timing down a massive drop. But we practiced, and practiced, until 1/10 became 2/3 – almost physically hard-wiring the trick's 'flow' into our wrists, rather than simply remembering button presses like *Tony Hawk*. And we tried to hit the rail. Again. And again – until *finally*, in a glorious fusion of luck, timing and skill – you nail it right, and your body flushes with satisfaction. Better yet, the moment can be captured forever using *Skate*'s video editor – see the previous page – saved to your hard drive, and shared online. You might spend ages perfecting an incredible line, but nail it once, and it stays in your head, and hard drive, forever.

Face value The create-a-skater mode's very basic – as this odd version of Editor Dan proves.

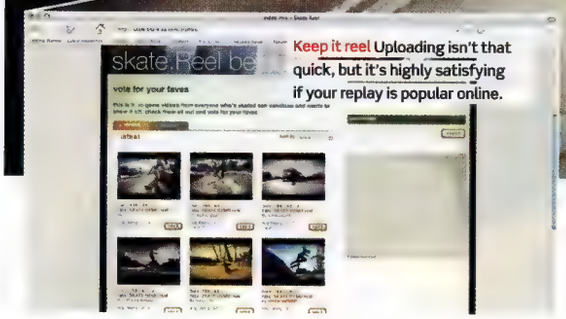
Coffin dodger

Even five hours in, we were learning subtle tricks – like sideways sweeping the stick 180° to slide from Switch to Regular stance. Other moves, like Coffin rides (where the skater lies on his back), Caveman grabs and Nose Blunts only flourish over time.

The free-roaming city, San Vanelona, is huge – imagine traversing Liberty City on a skateboard – with four distinct locations: the open streets of the Suburbs (plus the Community Centre), the gnarly banks, pools and narrow leaps of The Res, the towering, bespoke ledges and statues of Downtown, and the vertical streets and wicked banks of Old Town. The world can feel meandering, with relatively empty spaces between dense trick areas, but that's the point – this is real life, not *Hawk*, and you can generate real, genuinely thrilling momentum on the hills, steering in twitchy panic as your trucks generate real speed wobble. It's a neat juxtaposition between obstacles, and mellow cruising – in any case, you can always use the tube stations to 'leap' between areas, or warp direct to career objectives using the map.

The environment doesn't just engender speed, but scale – in Ali Boulala's mission, you need to leap down a 50ft drop, bouncing halfway off a bank to save your life. In *Hawk*, this would be a floaty non-event, but here, given real-world gravity and the seared and curved architecture, it's a real leap of death. After 50 consecutive breathtaking slams, the relief when you

Board? Never Complete pro skater's tasks to earn sponsors and get free gear – then edit and save your best replays and post them online for the world to rate.



Keep it reel Uploading isn't that quick, but it's highly satisfying if your replay is popular online.

actually, finally plant safely onto terra firma is astonishing.

Problems? Steering is fiddly in tight spots. You often get stuck behind scenery, which is irritating when aligning for pinpoint leaps – the sequel is sure to feature a 'get off board' feature, if only for navigation. The structure *can* feel a little meandering, since objectives unlock in pyramid style batches – you'll spend ages locating what looks like your final task, only to unlock twelve more seconds later. There's no true flatland tricks, caspar slides or acid drops (all *Tony Hawk* staples), though these are certain for the sequel.

The loading times are intrusive, especially when entering objectives, or leaping to a far off 'session marker' outside of the scenery's draw distance. The PS3 version, *arguably*, is a little rougher round the edges than the Xbox game, with some minor slowdown and glitches, though the texturing and detail is richer. Both versions have identical features, however, with exemplary animation, so the difference really is negligible.

Career Mode

Tasks include 'Owning' spots (breaking scores in set locations), Filming goals (e.g. grind 80 feet in 30 seconds), and Photo Shoots (land a set trick).

In short, it's a triumph of creativity over the numbingly competent, demographic pandering 'products' we're usually forced to endure. It has a singular vision to match that of developers like Hideo Kojima, or Shinji Mikami – the man who told Capcom to rip up *Resi 4* and start again, because the first *three* versions didn't work. You'll never look at the world in the same way again, constantly seeking out prime grinds, lines and leaps. If you demand a game hold your hand, this might not be truly essential, but if you're seeking the ultimate toy set to flex your imagination, *Skate* is the perfect way of letting go. **Dan Dawkins**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Skate* contains...**
Huge drops | Buzzing traffic | Cheap Trick's Surrender | Incredible replays

Overall A skater's skate game *anyone* can enjoy, with near-perfect controls and novel video editing.

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Pub Sega | **Dev** Sega Racing Studio
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-8 (online)

ON THE DISC
You can see *Sega Rally* on the disc now
PS3/Latest

Sega Rally

Mucky fun, but Sega's mud bath is shallower than McRae's *DiRT*...

KNOW IT NOW

Latest entry in the ancient rally series? ☑
Wonderful, life-affirming mud? ☑
Slightly weedy, simplistic handling? ☑
As good as a certain gruff Scottish driver? ☒

Last issue, we said this would have to go some to top *Colin McRae: DiRT*. Yet, when you're hurtling into a hairpin at 180 degrees, smashing the Subaru in front of you into a wall – in a glorious spectacle of searing speed and cascading HD mud – you'd be forgiven for thinking that maybe, just *maybe*, *Sega Rally* will throttle hard enough to succeed... only to choke on fumes of regret a short few hours later. While it provides a breezy tonic to *McRae*'s more demanding driving, the initially spectacular action soon feels flat and limited. And the lack of depth or variety in the handling – more on that later – leaves it struggling for a podium place. Meaning *Colin McRae* doesn't just overtake *Sega Rally*, but spits dirt over its windscreen.

That said, no game does mud like *Sega Rally* – not even *Motorstorm*. It looks utterly gorgeous, clinging to every inch of your bodywork like limpets to a ship. This brown stuff isn't just for incidental effect either, having a genuine impact on the way you drive. As cars carve their way through off-road sections they leave tread marks, which provide better traction and greater speed – if you can drive through them, that is. This lends *Sega Rally* its only real tactical component, and trying to hold a racing line to match your opponents' mud tracks is a challenge.

Everything about the game has a bright, brash feeling about it too, with an enjoyably eccentric edge. If *DiRT* is a grizzled Scotsman, forced to have a shave and a spruce-up for his latest game, then *Sega Rally* is an excitable Japanese teenager with a caffeine addiction. As a result, courses are a sensory overload. Combining blaring arcade music, a bold cartoony look, and landscapes that feature everything from elephants to paragliders. It's just a shame the driving model can't match the vibrant ambience.

Lightly does it

This is one racer stuck too firmly in its arcade roots. It may have been fine in the late '90s, but with modern driving games offering much more subtle, diverse handling, it makes the mostly unchanged *Sega Rally* feel archaic. Driving is simply a case of flooring your way through straights

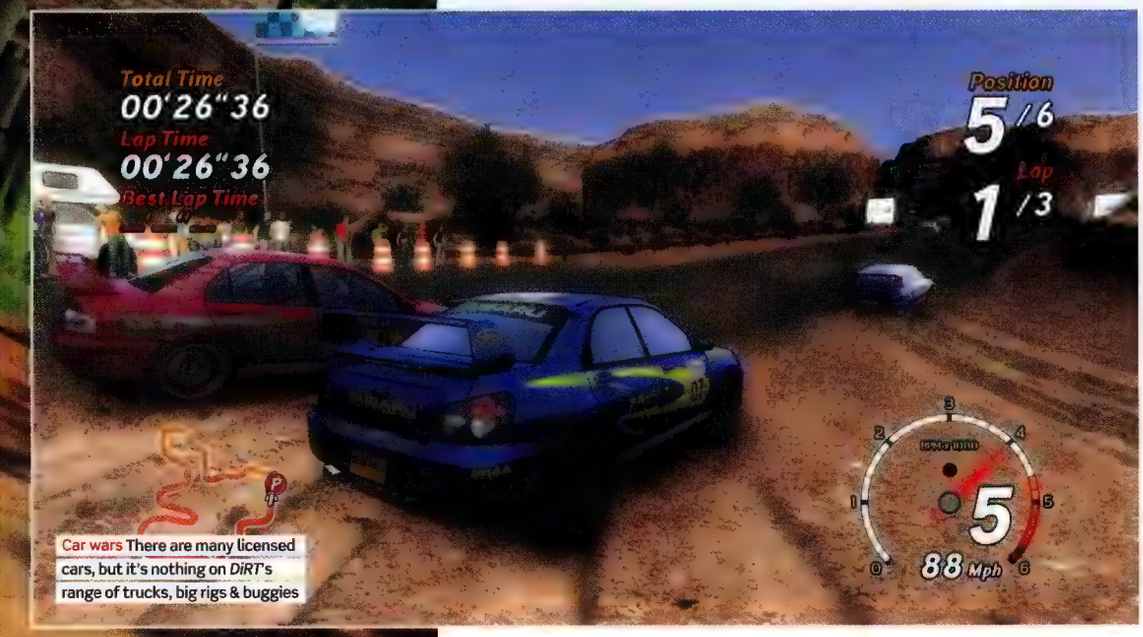
Sega Rally

"It's not about realism, but you'll find a heck of a lot to like in this game"

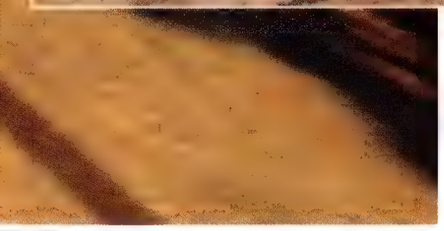
Bonnet-fire night The bonnet cam is the best way to play, and really conveys a terrific sense of speed.

Life's a beach Carving up sand on a lush tropical course is a highlight, but can be treacherous with so many cars.

Forest Gump Narrow forest roads are some of the harder sections you have to navigate in *Sega Rally*.



Car wars There are many licensed cars, but it's nothing on *DiRT*'s range of trucks, big rigs & buggies



and then easing up slightly for the tighter corners. You accelerate with R2, using L2 for braking and ⊗ for handbrakes, but you'll only use those last two for the very sharpest hairpins. This wouldn't matter so much if the cars had a sense of weight, but all the vehicles feel insubstantial and too similar, often feeling more like driving Scalextric than souped-up rally speedsters. Combine this with invisible walls that stop you going off the track and that there's zero car damage, and the whole experience feels a bit sterile.

But, while the game doesn't quite nail the sense of controlling a rally car, it is fast. Blisteringly fast, constantly zipping along at a smooth 60fps, which makes drifting at a 120 mph a thrill. It's challenging too, and with four different leagues ranging from amateur to premier to choose from, all of which contain multiple tournaments that get progressively harder, there's plenty to get your rims stuck into.

Net gain

Online, this is better than *DiRT*, with proper contests. Much better than racing against gamers' best times like *McRae*.

A muddy good time

If you want any semblance of realism in a rally game, pick up *DiRT*. See, *Sega Rally* isn't about realism, torque or calibrators. It's about chucking yourself around a hairpin at a ridiculous angle, impossibly long drifts, and grin-inducing moments like when a jet fighter roars over your car. It's a spectacle. And if any of that appeals, and it really should, then you'll find a heck of a lot to like in *Sega Rally*. But, due to the overly simplistic handling, we just feel this is rather more suited to the arcades than your living room. Congratulations on the mud, though, *Sega*. Let's get you a towel for that windscreen. **Dave Meikleham**

Fave Feature

"Wallowing in mud like a blissful hippo"

PSM3 Verdict

***Sega Rally* contains...**

Lightweight handling | A blistering frame rate | Glorious mud | Giraffes

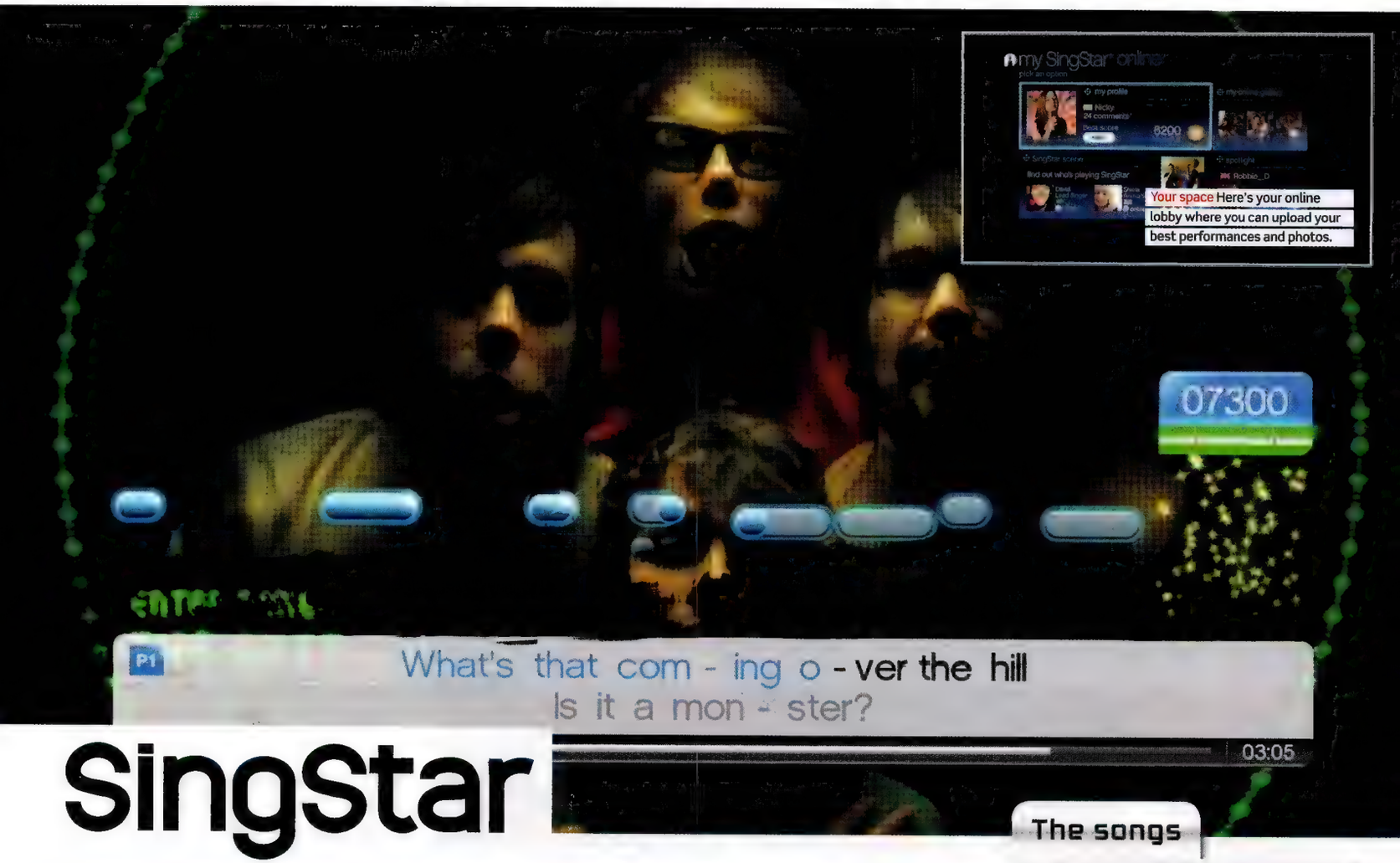
Overall Too simplistic to compete with *DiRT*, but this is still an enjoyable, pure, arcade racer.

79

PS3

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-6

ON THE DISC
We'll review *SingStar* on next issue's disc
PS3/Reviews


my SingStar online
Your space Here's your online lobby where you can upload your best performances and photos.
07300
P1
What's that com - ing o - ver the hill
Is it a mon - ster?
03:05

SingStar

Ready your vocal chords – online infamy awaits

Tricky, this. *Singstar* doesn't really *need* PS3's seven core parallel processing power – so what's the big change? Simple. Rather than forcing you to buy hundreds of instalments – *Rock, 80s, R&B* and so on – you can now buy songs individually, like itunes. Oh, and now you can broadcast your shame *online*.

SingStar PS3 comes with 30 tunes of varying quality, from the catchy high-pitch squeals of the Scissor Sisters to the growls of Twisted Sister (not related). Swing your eyes right for the full list. The crux of the game is largely unchanged as you grab the mic, belt out your chosen track and desperately try to keep your vocals in tune with the melody. Simple. But it's the online features that have really upped the ante.

Brit's all over Back before Miss Spears went mental she used to make decent pop songs like this song, Toxic.

Eye do

Using the PlayStation Eye – PS3's very own EyeToy with built in mic – you can record yourself dancing to Britney or shuffling to Radiohead, and then upload your best performances to My SingStar – a sort of cross between YouTube and MySpace for online users. Here you can challenge high-scores set by other players, post snaps of your mewling face as you try to hit the high notes of Coldplay's Fix You or even download wallpapers of your favourite stars. Speaking of downloading, the SingStar Store means that you can buy new songs via an iTunes style system to boost your collection. Sadly, prices are still under wraps. Our guess? Quid(ish) a track.

So *SingStar* PS3 is everything we hoped for (with the exception of not being bundled with wireless mics - boo) and being able to download new tracks at the touch of a button is masterstroke. It's still the ultimate party game, at least until *Rock Band* comes out.

Nathan Irvine

Get the show on the road

You can transfer your videos onto a memory stick and then play them back using your PSP, if you like.

The songs

Tracklist

What you'll be singing...

Blink 182: All the Small Things | Blur: Coffee And TV | Britney Spears: Toxic | Coldplay: Fix You | Gorillaz: Feel Good Inc. | Gwen Stefani: Cool | Junior Senior: Move Your Feet | Macy Gray: I Try | Musical Youth: Pass The Dutchie | Ne-Yo: So Sick | Orson: No Tomorrow | Outkast: Hey Ya | Primal Scream: Movin' On Up | Pussycat Dolls: Beep | Radiohead: No Surprises | Razorlight: America | REM: Losing My Religion | Robbie Williams and Nicole Kidman: Something Stupid | Scissor Sisters: I Don't Feel Like Dancing | Supergrass: Alright | The Automatic: Monster | The Cardigans: Lovefool | The Fratellis: Chelsea Dagger | The Killers: Mr Brightside | The Stone Roses: She Bangs The Drum | The Zutons: Valerie | Twisted Sister: We're Not Gonna Take It | U2: Beautiful Day | Weezer: Buddy Holly | Wolfmother: Love Train

PSM3 Verdict

***SingStar* contains...**
Britney | Gwen Stefani | Blur | Video uploads | Potential net embarrassment

Overall The complete party package, made yet more essential by all the new features.

81

12+
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MOTORSTORM
This is living
PLAYSTATION 3

Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-4 (online)

ON THE DISC
Watch *Stranglehold* on the disc right now

Stranglehold

It's got the director and the star – but has John Woo's game got the action?

KNOW IT NOW

- Slide down a dino's spinebone? ☑
- Dive off an exploding boat? ☑
- Shoot everyone in the testicles? ☑
- Carry an incontinent baby around? ☒

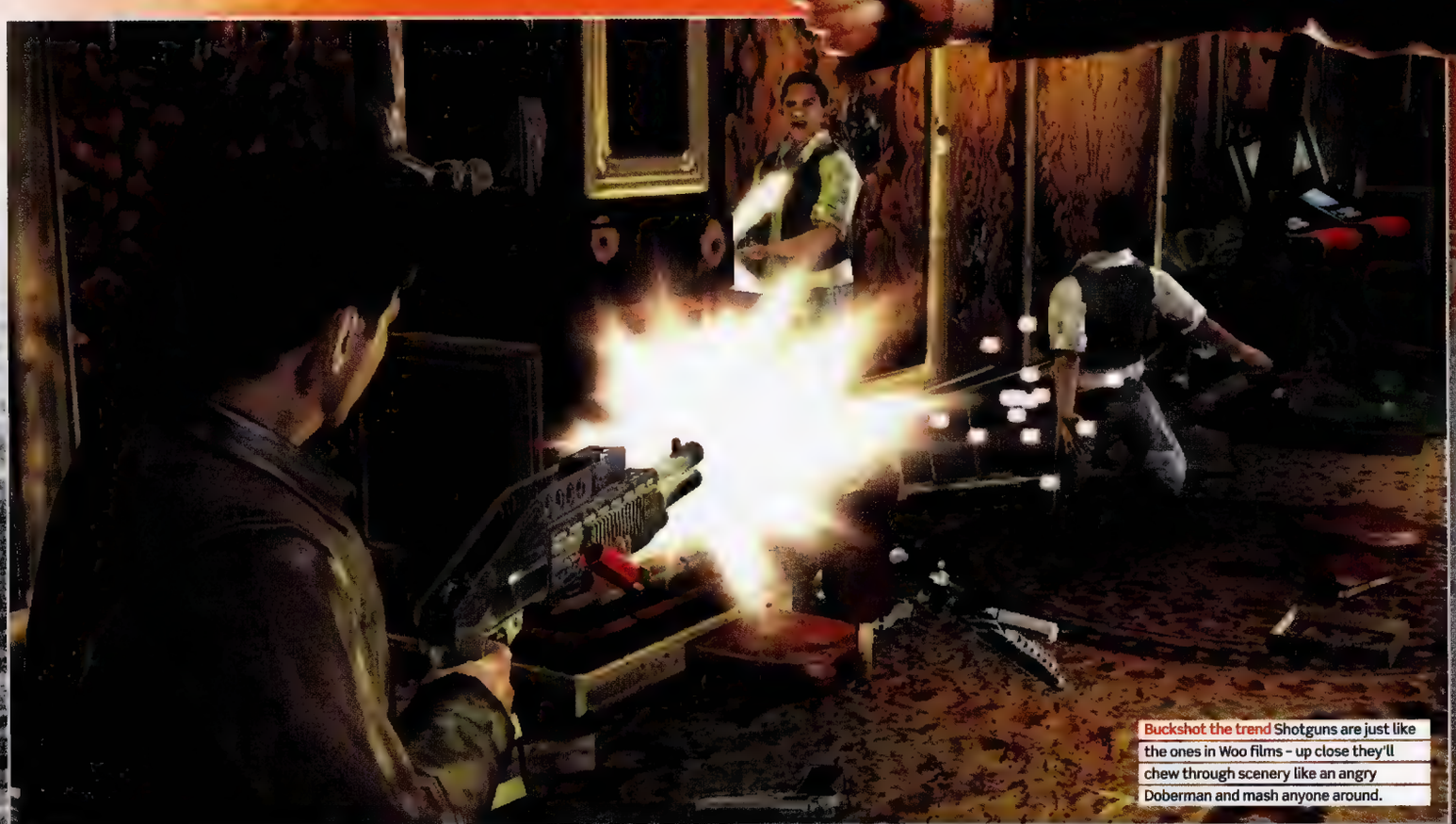
They never mention all the talking. All those people who wax poetic about John Woo's reinvention of the movie shootout, they never mention the massive conversations that bookend the fights. Chow Yun Fat spends about half of a Better Tomorrow 2 doing a bad impression of Rain Man. But it's these calm moments that give context to the later bloodshed – without them, you've just got a load of shooting. So how does Stranglehold cope with only two minutes of banter for every 10,000 bullets?

Surprisingly well, as it turns out. John Woo gunfights have always been loud and stupid, and *Stranglehold* just cranks the volume up. Just like his movie counterpart, virtual Fat never needs to reload – he just slings his guns away and finds a fresh pair. Just like his on-screen enemies, *Stranglehold*'s bad guys rarely hide or do anything clever – instead, they run at him head-on, then cartwheel and explode like bags of jam when shot. Even when someone takes cover, it's easier to simply mince whatever they're hiding behind with gunfire than try to outflank them. You rarely, if ever, need to stop shooting – every level's an unending drum roll of gunfire.

Seek and destroy

Then, of course, there's the fact that every level's full of priceless vases and giant fish tanks. *Stranglehold*'s designed to be smashed up like you're an angry toddler, and with their Massive Destructibility engine firmly in place, Midway have gone all out giving you things to blast. How can you *not* smirk as you destroy the entire terracotta army during one boss fight, or blast a T-Rex skeleton to bits? What's better than hiding next to a giant gong that clangs as enemy shots ping off it, then obliterating the pillars they're hiding behind with machine gun fire? The satisfaction on seeing a level thoroughly destroyed is amazing.

It helps, too, that Stranglehold wants you to play it like the real inspector Tequila would. You can hide – and it's worth it to see Fats grimace as bullets ping off around him – but you're encouraged to get out in the open and mix it up. Press ○ to dive, ride on a trolley, swing on a chandelier or run up/slide down a bannister and – if there's a bad guy anywhere near your sights – the game automatically flicks into Tequila Time, which slows things down and makes you almost invincible. Playing this way has the added bonus of building up Tequila



Buckshot the trend Shotguns are just like the ones in Woo films – up close they'll chew through scenery like an angry Doberman and mash anyone around.

Cool Move

Things automatically flick into Tequila time when you're doing something impressive and focused on a bad guy – so you spend half of the game listening to the whooshy slo-mo effect. It does let you dodge bullets, though.

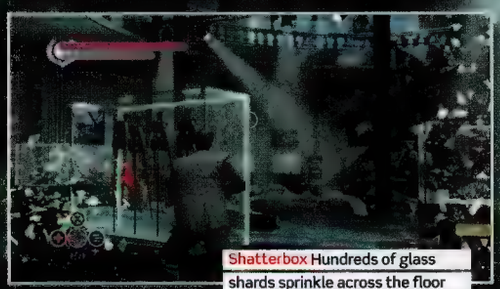
"The bad guys explode like bags of jam when they get shot"

Destruction

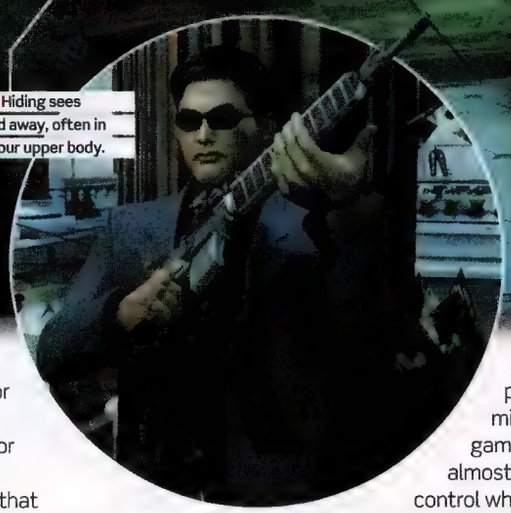
Smashing a level to bits

Stranglehold's museum level, shot and shattered into a million pieces

Jurassic park With no regard for history, Tequila blows an ancient dinosaur fossil to pieces with his SPAS shotgun. You can slide down its spine, too. Neat.



Shatterbox Hundreds of glass shards sprinkle across the floor during fights. What a mess...



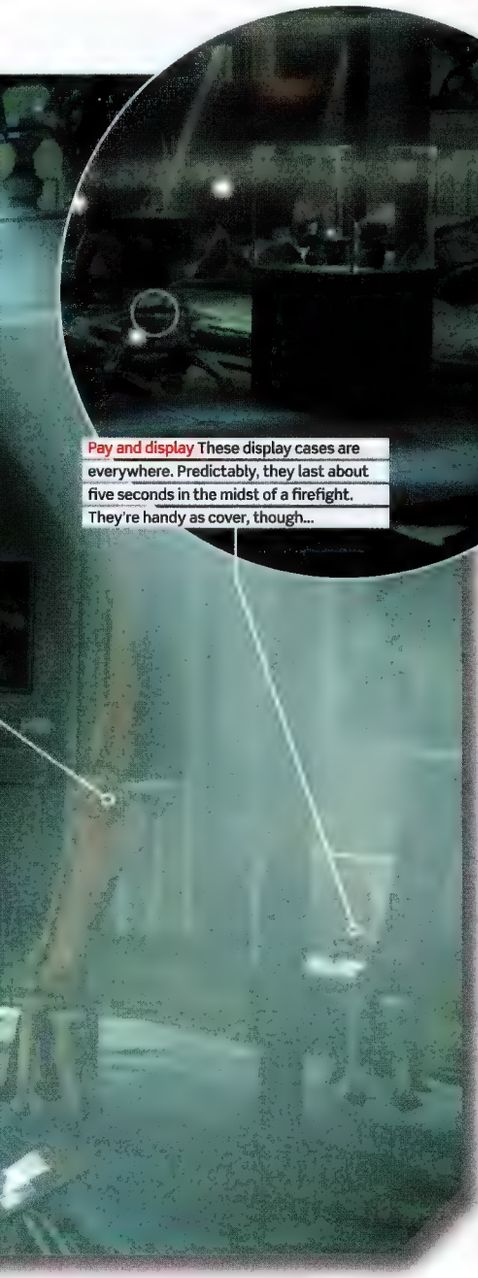
Duck and cover Hiding sees scenery chipped away, often in the outline of your upper body.

power, which can be traded for extra health, precision shots or screen-clearing barrages. To put that another way: stay in cover and you'll be relatively safe, but also constantly scrimping for health and ammo, and find yourself scuppered when you're confronted by a crowd or a sniper.

But. Without much talking to vary the pace, *Stranglehold* obviously feels like it needs to do other things to stay entertaining, and it rarely handles these as well as the shooting. An early section blasting people from a chopper illustrates the problem: going on for about five minutes too long, it feels so tacked-on it's almost like a remnant from a different game. Other set pieces are simply misjudged: in a game where it's almost impossible to control where you land after a dive, who wants to play a section where even brushing one of dozens of laser tripwires means instant death?

Standoff-ish

Worst of all are the Mexican standoffs. Obviously, in films, the point of these is that *nobody shoots anybody* – a single bullet could be fatal, so they're nice opportunities for the protagonists have a little chat while they point guns at each other. In the game, Fat takes about 50 bullets in the chest every level, so the menace is lost from these – all that's left is



Pay and display These display cases are everywhere. Predictably, they last about five seconds in the midst of a firefight. They're handy as cover, though...

Come and die Early bad guys are happy to stand under precarious signs, near exploding barrels, and next to dodgily balanced boulders. Or statues of horses.

a stupid minigame where you waggle the left stick to dodge bullets and use the right to shoot enemies. There are two or three every level, and they never, ever make sense or provide any sort of fun – at best, you get through them quickly and move on.

Unlike Woo's films, *Stranglehold* starts to fall apart a bit in the final reel. It's nothing to do with the environments, which stay varied throughout: the contrast between the rain-slicked ghetto fight – Chow fighting with his wet hair plastered down - and the final standoff in the boss's blossom-dappled garden is as beautiful as anything we've ever seen. The trouble's more with the pacing – early levels are jammed with interactive objects to shoot and things that'll go boom, while later ones are a bit more static. Perhaps aware that it's a bit on the short side, *Stranglehold* also resorts to the classic game-extension tactic of tacking extra waves of enemies onto set-pieces, so they end up feeling bloated and overlong as a result. Boss fights are fine but unimaginative – every one falls into the pattern of shoot-the-goons, precision-shoot-the-big-guy.

Depending on how you look at it, *Stranglehold*'s either a bit too short – we clocked it in under six hours – or way, way too long. Any one of its major gunfights alone is a searing, thrilling, pop video of a blast, guaranteed to pull adoring coos and get people clamouring for a pad. Taken in succession, though, 10 films-worth of bullet-duels in one game can get a bit much. For a quick blast it's astonishing– and Fats' facial contortions should go down in gaming as the first celebrity appearance to really enhance a game – but it needs something else. Maybe there should have been more talking. **Joel Sanpe**

Woo's The Boss

The game's lead character is an older version of Inspector Tequila, the toothpick-chewing hero of Woo's Hard Boiled. Woo himself appears as the game's shopkeeper, and can be bought as a multi-player skin for a whopping 2,000 points.

Chopper the morning The helicopter section breaks up play, but feels tacked-on and is far too long.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Stranglehold* contains...**
Gallons of claret | Millions of bullets | A big fat tattooed man | Several teary moments

Overall The gunplay is astonishingly entertaining, but *Stranglehold* sorely lacks any variety.

78

Pub Sony | **Dev** Ninja Theory
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Watch our *Heavenly Sword* review next issue
Reviews/PS3

Larger than life This is Roach, King Bohan's son. He's a man-baby who plays with corpses. Lovely.

Heavenly Sword

Sony's double-edged sword glints but doesn't quite cut it

KNOW IT NOW

Hollywood production values? ☑
Good use of the Sixaxis? ☑
Gorgeous cut-scenes? ☑
Worth buying a PlayStation 3 for? ☒

Heavenly Sword is a dazzling cinematic spectacle. It uses the very latest in motion capture technology, it has Andy 'Gollum' Serkis in it, the voice actors are seasoned thespians and Hollywood special effects studio Weta Digital helped create the cut-scenes. But in all the excitement, Ninja Theory forgot that, above all, they were *making a game*. Something to be played, not watched. And it's in between the cut-scenes that you realise just how shallow it really is.

Strip away the gloss and there's little weight to *Heavenly Sword*'s action. Nariko has three stances – fast, heavy and projectile – which must be switched between to parry enemies' attacks. If an enemy glows blue as they attack, use a fast attack to counter. If they glow orange, use a heavy attack. It's button bashing dressed up as something more complex.

Load of old boss

The boss battles are worse – like something from the 8-bit era, with predictable attack patterns and increased power as their health drops. They're so boring, just thinking about them makes our eyelids droop. Given the vibrancy of Ninja Theory's debut – *Kung Fu Chaos* on Xbox – the dull, filmic feel of *Heavenly Sword*'s bosses is hard to comprehend.

The second-to-last boss in the game is Flying Fox, a cackling airborne lunatic who glides above the ground throwing boomerangs at you. To beat him you have to deflect the 'rangs with your sword so they spring back and hit him, and then you counter his attacks on the ground. Occasionally he'll clone himself and you'll have to kill the copies. It's half an hour of thankless, utterly archaic, toil.

Pretty much anything you can pick up – even bodies – can be thrown and guided through the air in slow-mo using the Sixaxis, which is the basis for the game's puzzles. Well, 'puzzles' isn't the right word. You aren't left with a single thing to figure out for yourself. The camera zooms in on all of the items required to solve the riddle in a cut-scene, and they have a sparkly effect

Shell out When the battle's over, Nariko rips the enormo-baby's protective shell off. Thrilling.

War games In the second-to-last level Nariko takes on an entire army with this mighty cannon.

Baby face Roach spins about the level for a bit, then either gets dizzy or smashes into something. When he does, stab him until he's dead. Complicated.

on them too, just in case you're too thick to remember later. Second clue you're about to do a puzzle: the game gives you a box of infinite projectiles. Pah.

Kai in the sky

There's a glimmer of hope in the shooting missions. Playing as Nariko's mental adopted sister Kai, you use the Sixaxis to guide arrows through the air. It sounds like a gimmick – see the 'puzzles' mentioned above – but it's *loads* of fun. Master the subtleties of arrow control and you can aim for specific body parts. Watching an arrow hit a soldier squarely in the buttocks in slow motion is intensely satisfying thanks to the specific reaction animations. In a cruel twist, a later scene sees you guiding arrows while hanging upside down with reversed controls.

Heavenly Sword's flaws run deep, even if there are still a dozen or so sections you'll genuinely enjoy – the 1000-men scraps look spectacular (even if most enemies are inactive 3D garnish outside the action zone), but ruined by the arbitrary 'kill 30 foes' or 'break the catapults in less than two minutes' bits. The aforementioned Flying Fox boss battle ends on a clever note (Kai is dead. No wait...), but instantly spoiled by it telling you EXACTLY what to do. Fighting's OK, and more block-centric than *God of War*, but your powers don't upgrade in a coherent, sensible way – at the end, you're suddenly near-invincible.

Blast factor Guide Kai's arrows through flames so they ignite handily-placed explosive barrels.

Cannon and ball **Guiding cannon-balls with the Sixaxis into swarms of soldiers in the battlefield levels is a thrill. These bits look incredible and are one of the game's few highlights.**

After seven, largely irritating, hours, the game ends. It looks and sounds awesome, but underneath lurks an old-fashioned, outmoded game that's been bettered by games like *Onimusha 3* and *God of War 2*. The lazy design and reliance on flashy visuals is almost *insulting*. Just like *Lair*, another promising PS3 game has fallen from the heavens to earth. **Andy Kelly**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Heavenly Sword* contains...**
Brilliant motion-sensing Sixaxis bits | Top notch graphics | No real substance

Overall For all its showboating, this is an average action game with few standout moments.

65

PS2

Pub EA | **Dev** EA
Price £30 | **Release** September 28
Multiplayer 1-8

ON THE DISC
We'll have *FIFA* reviewed on next issue's disc

FIFA 08

Giant-killer? FIFA *finally* almost matches PES.

No, this isn't *FIFA* on PS3 – EA delayed the code at the last moment (see below) – but the good news is that the PS2 version, building on the success of *FIFA 07* (PSM80 84%), is probably EA's strongest football outing yet.

Rather than tinker with a winning formula, EA have added a few extra tricks and treats to *FIFA 08*, like Zone Play and Be A Pro mode (more later). Passing is slick, dribbling is quick and satisfying, and the goals are worthy of Match of the Day's Goal Of The Month competition. But, although there are more animations, they still come with the same juddery problems. Ronaldinho has more tricks than a conman, but you get breaks in play where the opposition will either take the ball away mid-animation or comically fall to the floor as you dribble round them.

Pro's encounter

Be A Pro mode – the exciting third-person feature from the PS3 version, that casts you as a single player (so you, say, play as Paul Scholes all game) with AI team-mates, using a new, close-up view of the action – is here too. Sadly, though, it's reduced to nothing more than controlling one player using the same zoomed-out camera view as normal. Still, it's great fun – more so with up to four players, allowing you to control the spine of the team.

FIFA 08 also has Zone Play. This allows you to control certain lines of your formation, like the entire midfield, all four defenders or the attackers. You can even play as the goalie. In layman's terms it's kind of like playing with one bar on a table football set, and to be honest we don't see the point – you find yourself wanting to control all the players most of the time.

A thing of beauty
The facial likenesses look decidely better on PS2 than the PS3's melted equivalents. Shouldn't it be the other way round?

Still, given the presentation, spot-on commentary, over 30 leagues and tournaments, and 620 licenced teams, *FIFA 08* is a great package, and arguably *Pro Evo 2008's* equal – on PS2 anyway. It's a shame that this year's *real* head-to-head will take place on PS3, as EA have nearly caught up – albeit a season too late. **Nathan Irvine**

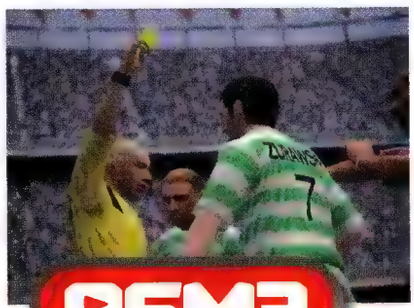
Stop press

FIFA on PS3

Where's our review?

FIFA 08 on PS3 is in shops now, but EA weren't able to supply review code before our deadline. Why? It may be nothing – but based on preview code, office opinion is mixed. It's a bit slow, tricks don't really work and shooting's squiffy. It *might* all get sorted, but before you buy, best check our review of *FIFA 08* at www.psm3mag.com today.

READ ME!



PSM3 BUY IT

PSM3 Verdict

***FIFA 08* contains...**
50 music tracks | Sweet volleys | Gameplay not far off PES quality

Overall Pretty much the same as *FIFA 07* but tighter and more feature-packed than ever. A good effort.

85

Corner stone The set-pieces are similar to *Pro Evo*, if more forgiving, but you can call in a player by holding L2.

Born to skill While the various skill moves look impressive they still feel shoehorned in to the action compared to *Pro Evo's* precise player-beating jinks and shuffles.

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Pub SCEE | **Dev** Factor 5
Price £40 | **Release** October 19
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
See *Lair* on the disc now
PS3/Latest

Stick around Ground combat lets you use stick rather than tilt control – a wise move were the combat itself less scrappy.

Lair

Well, the Sixaxis control works quite well. Everything else, however...

KNOW IT NOW

Full of fantastic spectacle? ☑
A monstrous combat balls-up? ☑
Worth a quick go for some dragon love? ☑
Worth all the waiting and the hype? ☒

This is less a game, more a *slope* – despite the promising official line, it's downhill from there. This is Factor 5's latest cutting-edge title, made over many years, rich with breathtaking new features and one of the hottest (no pun intended) prestige titles in the PS3 line-up. It's fast. It's furious. It's epic. And it plays like developer Factor 5's Nintendo title, *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron*. Really.

Bad breath

Granted, *Lair* has you riding dragons using a tilt-sensitive controller, defending giant Manta rays and bombing steam-powered artillery with giant kegs of dynamite rather than bombing through space in an X-Wing. But does it seriously think it's fooling anyone? Even if you've played none of Factor 5's Star Wars games before, with their defending and their bombing and their circling and their strafing, you'll sense right away that something seriously past its sell-by-date is lurking beneath this game's scaly surface.

As Rohn, virtuous defender of the Asylian civilisation, it's your job to ride into battle against the ruthless, all-conquering Mokai. In a world of plunging valleys, crystalline seas and burning skies, the two nations have been driven apart by years of war. A thirst for knowledge has led the Asylia to build vast, magnificent cities. The Mokai, meanwhile, have a terrifying war machine of exotic beasts and steam-powered technology. We know this because the game tacks the word 'steam' on to whatever it's talking about. Steam-cannons. Steam-factories. Steam-tanks... *Lair* is full of hot air (chortle).

In fact, *Lair* might well be the most flatulent game we've ever seen, with its unskippable THX logo, Making Of clips, bonus artworks, hour of HD cut-scenes and soundtrack by the guy who scored Sin City. It has it all – everything except a decent game and a story to match.

A typical mission will start you off on-foot, ready to mount your dragon with a

Motion sickness Swishing about on your dragon with the Sixaxis is OK. Not much else is, though.

Fire down below Taking out siege units before your army falls is one of many tiresome objectives.

Ghost rider Too many hits and you'll fall from your mount to a sudden death. Again.

press of ⓐ. There's no dismounted combat or exploration in *Lair*, but we're not sure why when the facility's clearly there. It's just not used. Once airborne, your mission will present itself with a vague instruction to defend one thing or destroy another. Clicking the thumbstick gives you more precise directions, though actually finding the target and locking on to it becomes a mission in itself.

Ground targets will usually succumb to volleys of fireballs, though occasionally you'll need to drop bombs, pluck larger monsters off the ground or, peculiarly, sit on the target and waggle your entire joypad up and down until it explodes. Air combat, meanwhile, can require anything from long-range spitting contests to QTE executions, which involve you flicking and jerking the Sixaxis like a mad person. Imagine trying to throw the controller at your cat, but finding that it's glued to your hand. It's similar.

Lair's overarching problem is that there's no framework telling it what to do. Unlike earlier Factor 5 games, there's no Star Wars or Indiana Jones license dictating how its controls should work, what its characters should say or how its missions should evolve. The result is an absolute shambles.

Wing it

The simple act of flying, at least, *can* be a pleasure. The Sixaxis copes surprisingly well when it comes to steering, even in the most chaotic battles, while the creatures themselves are gorgeously animated. But the legacy of *Rogue Squadron* turns all of this into a nightmare. By the time you've lined up a target you're typically past it, your fingers struggling to remember which button was the brake and which the melee lunge. There's no rhyme or reason to any of the game's objectives, which begin almost randomly with mid-mission cut-scenes and usually involve escorting something amid cries of "there's too many of them!" and "I can't take much more!"

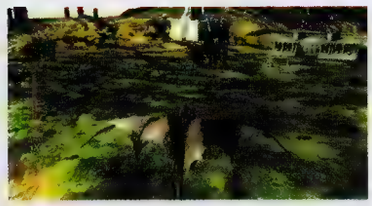
How much of it *you* can take comes down to preference and your ability to see past a wall of problems to the game's genuine virtues. Despite frame rate problems, glitches and a miserable colour palette, *Lair* can be breathtaking to look at.

Fool's gold
Meeting kill and speed quotas earns you medals. But does anyone actually care? In something so full of glitches and so tough to enjoy, it's hard to get excited over some fancy engraved teeth and trivial bonus content.

Combat

Ground offensive

Why ground scraps will leave you breathing fire...



Touchdown Just hold both triggers to land, you say? Funny, it doesn't seem to work half the time.

Charge Your stick-controlled rampage makes whole armies glitch madly in terror.

Blast Someone give him a mint. Randomly spitting fire usually gets the job done

Escape Both triggers again, this time to take off. Thank God you don't have to do this too often

Everything about it screams epic, and every now and then it manages to justify that claim. But it's a tough haul the rest of the time, and boy does it ever drag on. Get it? Oh, please yourself. **Duncan Harris**

PSM3 Verdict

***Lair* contains...**
Delusions of grandeur | Delectable dragons | Despair.

Overall Lord Of The Rings meets Reign Of Fire. And explodes. A massive disappointment.

54

Pub Sony | **Dev** Game Republic
Price £40 | **Release** Oct 12
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Watch our *Folklore* review on next month's disc

Thrill kill It's set in Ireland, but the character designs are distinctly 'Japanese RPG' in flavour.

Monster hospital This fella can only be harmed by the attack of a certain monster elsewhere in the level. This is about as deep as the game's tactical side goes.

Folklore

PS3's third ever RPG doesn't have the HP to compete with *Oblivion*

Folklore is like something your little sister might be into. It's got fairies in it, and butterflies, and cute little elves. But it's also fantastically bizarre, looking like the cover of a progressive rock album as viewed through the eyes of a man in the depths of an acid binge. It's a twisted mix of jarring psychedelic visuals and cute fairytale storytelling – and it's one of the oddest games we've ever played.

The game's like Ballykissangel as written by Hans Christian Andersen. Lead characters Keats and Ellen have been drawn to the sleepy rural Irish village of Doolin and find themselves battling monsters in a colourful netherworld of fairies and goblins. Ellen's there to find her missing mother, while Keats is writing a story for a magazine on the occult. By day, Doolin's inhabited by farmers and fish wives, but when night falls the locals retreat to their homes and the local boozer fills up with bizarre creatures, including a talking rat in a top hat.

Nick of time To steal bigger beasts' souls you have to jerk and shake the Sixaxis in time with on-screen prompts.

Block rockin' Keats

It's very, very silly, and so is the combat system. Keats and Ellen absorb the souls of monsters – by holding R1 and jerking back the Sixaxis, which is pointlessly knackering – and use them to attack. Defeat a strange rolling armadillo creature, for example, and you can use him as a bowling ball to crush enemies. This is *Folklore*'s best feature (motion-sensing malarkey aside) and the amount of monsters whose souls are available for nicking is genuinely impressive.

But the problem's not with the combat; it's with the level design. They're far too linear and there's absolutely no element of exploration. Doolin looks gorgeous, but it's essentially just a backdrop for some incredibly tedious conversations. And in the netherworld itself all there is to do is solve puzzles – using certain captured monsters to pass certain obstacles, mostly – and get into fights.

Double impact **You can switch characters at the end of a chapter. Keats is good at physical attacks, while Ellen can trap enemies.**

We have the absolute hots for *Folklore*'s colourful environments, its originality and the monster-catching stuff, but it still feels depressingly lightweight compared to something like *Final Fantasy*. It's probably unfair to compare the two, but this is a PlayStation 3 game and we expect developers to be a little more adventurous now they have greater scope to indulge their creative urges, especially where RPGs are concerned. There's a PSP version of *Folklore* on the way, and in all honesty we think it's better suited there. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

***Folklore* contains...**
Oddly muscular journalist | Irish classic 'Danny Boy' | Sexy unlockable costumes

Overall Unique combat, but lacks depth for an RPG and would benefit from bolder set pieces.

69

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Square Enix | PSP | October 5

Final Fantasy Tactics: The War Of The Lions

A PSone remake that was worth the wait

Things must be pretty desperate for PSP when its best game in months is a port of a nine-year-old PSone strategy RPG, but if ever a game was deserving of a port, it's this. Not only because it's one of the best *Final Fantasies*, but because it was never released in the UK.

Chocobo selecta Familiar *FF* creatures are all here.

Set in Ivalice, the same world as *FFXII*, this is different from most *FF* games in that the plot's much more than a simple case of good versus evil. There are so many characters and complexities that it's hard to write a synopsis; it's a sweeping tale of war, politics and religion and it's genuinely one of the best we've ever come across in a game.

PSM3 BUY IT

Modern combat

The combat system's just as intricate. Battles take place on an isometric 3D map and you control your characters in turns, attacking, using items or defending when necessary. It's classic *FF* but with the addition of movement and character classes – knights, mages, healers and so on.

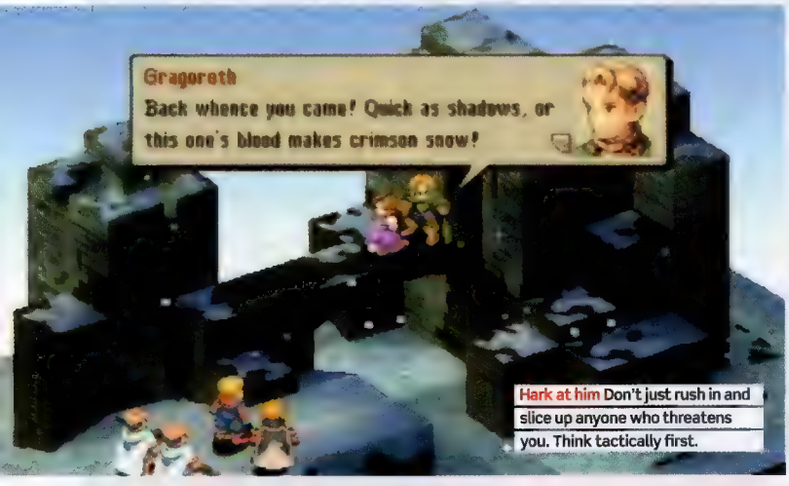
It doesn't sound complicated, but it's in the midst of battle that you realise just how important tactical play is. The positioning of your characters, for example. If you want to give your archers maximum range you send them to higher ground, but this leaves them open to being cornered by enemies and killed.

Incredible new cel-shaded cut-scenes, ad-hoc Wi-Fi play, improved dialogue and an extra character (*FFXII*'s sky pirate Balthier) are welcome extras, but even if this was a direct port of the original we'd still love it. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

Epic, tactical and polished – this will work your brain.

89



Hark at him Don't just rush in and slice up anyone who threatens you. Think tactically first.

Sony | PS3 | Out now

Trials Of Topoq

A trial of superhuman patience

Take Sega's devilishly addictive *Super Monkey Ball* series, attach it to a horribly unresponsive PlayStation Eye game and add a dash of inspired design. Well done – you've just made *Trials Of Topoq*.

Set in a fantasy world reminiscent of *Ico*, the game tasks you with steering a sphere along a series of courses. You move it by manipulating the surface of each track, which is done by flapping your arms like a madman to raise and lower floor tiles.

Is it difficult? Nah, just maddening. The controls feel broken and inconsistent at times – huge arm gestures will do nothing to move the sphere and then a slip of your shoulders will send it flying. Still, *Trials Of Topoq* offers some variety for those who persevere. There are four modes ranging from time trials to rolling through cages in a set order.

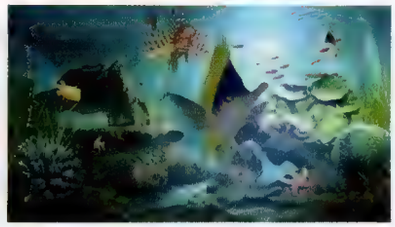
It looks beautiful too, and when the controls respond it can be engaging. Call us picky though, but when the effort it takes to move your ball five feet could trigger an aneurism, it doesn't seem worth the hassle. **Dave Meikleham**

52

Sony | PS3 | Out Oct

Aqua Vita

There's something fishy going on here



Have you ever wished your expensive HDTV was a fish tank? If the answer is yes, do we have the game for you. Although the term 'game' may be stretching the truth a bit – it's more of an interactive screensaver. So much so, in fact, it seems wrong to review it – hence the N/A below. *Aqua Vita* uses the PlayStation Eye to recreate a virtual tank filled with all sorts of coloured fish. And what fish they are – lion and clown and box fish, oh my.

They look so real you could almost touch them. Except – rubbishly – you can't. All you do is stretch out your arms to lightly disturb the water and rub your fingers to throw fish food, which is precisely as much fun as it sounds.

This is really all about the ambience, though, and in that respect *Aqua Vita* truly shines. The water effects are beautiful and everything from the underwater plant life to the occasional starfish has been rendered with startling detail. Admittedly, it may just be a glorified screensaver, but for a few quid it's a nice way to show off your HDTV/PS3 to bemused guests. **Dave Meikleham**

N/A

Vicious Cycle | PS3 | October 5

Operation Creature Feature

More like operation dislocated shoulder

Rip those gym memberships up now, because this will give you such a work-out you'll feel like you've been playing rugby league for 20 years. *Creature Feature* closely follows the concept of *Lemmings*, except instead of docile little animals you're dumped with ugly, malco-ordinated blobs called Blurbs. You're supposed to guide the creatures through 2D courses by slowly pushing them with your hands via PlayStation Eye, which works well in theory. In practice though, you'll often be left flailing about like an excitable pub-team goalie as the game struggles to read your movements.

The range of courses, set over five stages, are reasonably clever and see you trying to move your creatures through all manner of pitfalls, contraptions and environmental hazards, from pools of lava to traps doors and even magical teleports that transport you back to the beginning of a level. It's diverting enough in small doses, but the imprecise controls scupper things. **Dave Meikleham**

54

Virgin Play | PS2 | Out now

Final Armada

We really hope they mean 'final'

It's amazing that a console that can churn out something as beautiful as *God Of War 2* or *Okami* can also produce something that looks as utterly pap as this. *Final Armada* is a ground-based vehicle shooter, rather like an on-land version of Nintendo's *Star Fox* series. Set in a universe that feels like a straight-to-video Star Wars with plenty of Flash Gordon campness, the game has you driving a vehicle called an Aggressor. Controlling like a buggy (which can also hover with a click of R3) it looks laughable and reminds us of a mangled DeLorean mixed with a Micro Machine.

Levels see you tasked with a range of missions such as activating beacons, destroying enemy bases and protecting ally vehicles. All this action is completely ruined by unwieldy controls though, often requiring you to hold a combination of three shoulder buttons and ⊗ just to shoot and drive. Massively fiddly and awful to look at, this is one game best left in the bargain bin. **Dave Meikleham**

42

Koei | PS2 | September 28

Grim Grimoire

A 2D strategy game that isn't pots of fun

You are Lillet Blan (Harry Potter) and you've been invited to The Tower Of Silver Star (Hogwarts) to train as a magician under professor Gammel Dore (Dumbledore). Gammel Dore was called Gammel Drask in the Japanese version, but Koei's team have changed it to appeal to Western kiddies, fully aware that the game's a big fat Harry Potter knock-off. But, thankfully, a knock-off with a solid real-time strategy game up its wizard's sleeve.

The game is 2D and you control the action using a cursor, ordering your minions to move, attack, defend or harvest magical mana. Your foes range from arrow-flinging fairies to evil sorcerers and the goal of each map is to clear it of enemies or destroy a rival's crystal.

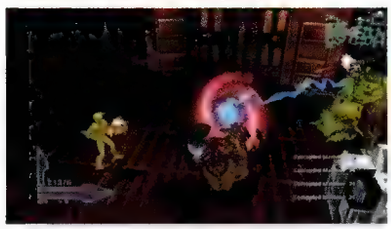
The colourful anime character design is fantastic, as is the voice acting and dialogue, but battles just aren't varied enough. The mechanics of the combat system are fine, but it doesn't have the scale of *Disgaea* and you'll long for more depth with every click. **Andy Kelly**

59

Sega | PSP | Out now

Alien Syndrome

In space, no one can hear you yawn



This game was big in 1987, but then so were bum bags. After ten years *Alien Syndrome* has evolved into a shooter that's heavy on the guns with a sprinkling of RPG skill juggling. You play as Aileen Harding, Earth Command Trooper and one-woman space taskforce. You can choose from five different character classes – Demo Expert, Firebug, SEAL, Sharpshooter or Tank – each with its own specific traits and fashionable outfits for Aileen. Later on you can adapt your choice and weapons by using your robotic side kick who, as well as providing blasting back-up, customises your weapons in the menu.

The missions involve finding a way through the map, usually with an ugly boss near the end, and then running to an exit. Getting from one point on the map to another uses about six brain cells, leaving the rest to bitch about the boring weapons and enemies. There are over 100 different types of alien lurking in the levels – which mainly look like overgrown bugs – but the chances are you won't keep playing long enough to see them all. **Rachel Weber**

45

EA Sports | PS3 | September 28

NHL 08

We won't bother with a 'puck' joke this year

Ice hockey games have always been love/hate affairs. If you're the kind of obsessive who stays up watching it until five in the morning, you'll love this. For everyone else this is still an enjoyable sports title, with solid production values, an intuitive control scheme and lots of blokes knocking each others teeth out.

The control system is the game's biggest success. You use the right stick to mimic slap shots, fakes and deeks – like step-overs in footie. But it takes some practice for it to seem natural. Persist and you'll find a system that lets you be creative and really captures the feel of manoeuvring your stick. Cough. It's intuitive and visceral, like *Fight Night*.

The animation is as slick as a greased seal and there's an admirable authenticity in everything, from reflections in the ice to the conviction of the commentary. The stop-start nature of the sport may put some off, though, and the number of fouls that are committed during matches breaks up the flow of the game. Still, if you've a passing interest in hockey, there's much to enjoy here. **Dave Meikleham**

77

Sony | PS2 | Out now

Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

Great on PSP. Not so great on PS2

Poor Gabe Logan. It must be hard to be stuck in Snake's shadow, while in possession of a moniker that sounds as if it's ripped from a bad '70s cop film. Gabe may have triumphed on PSP through an adventure that was tightly designed, offering solid controls, but what was an impressive achievement on handheld is now merely adequate by PS2 standards.

Dark Mirror, despite its stealthy roots, is actually more like a third-person shooter and this works to its benefit. Sony have sculpted a surprisingly decent targeting and cover system, which is now aided by the precision of control a proper pad offers, and it looks sharper than the PSP version too. Still, propped up on a big screen, *Dark Mirror* looks like a glorified budget title. And, for 30 quid without any new features, it's hard to recommend this over the plethora of quality shooters doing the rounds on PS2. **Dave Meikleham**

67

EA Sports | PS3 | Out now

Tiger Woods 08

New *Tiger* only just misses the rough

Green machine All *Tiger's* courses are authentic.

Tiger looks up. Eyes focused, the great man proceeds to hit a monster 300 foot drive. The ball soars gracefully through the air and lands on the green, a mere ten feet away from the hole. The perfect golf shot. And all you have to do is give the analogue stick a good thwack.

Got Woods?

That remains the problem for this year's *Tiger*. It does most of the hard work for you. Granted, the game manages to convey a satisfying sensation of connecting with the ball. But when the best club and angle are selected for you automatically, it takes away much of the danger and risk of a long drive or tee shot.

This is in sharp contrast to *Tiger*'s short game, though, which remains somewhat twitchy. We fluffed more putts than Sergio Garcia at this year's Open because it's difficult to gauge the power of shots once you make the green. Click R3, though, and the game switches to a more traditional power bar system. But playing like this really defeats the main selling point of the game – using sticks.

EA have introduced a few new features for the latest *Tiger*, like GameFace – where you can upload photos from your hard drive to create a perfect digital likeness of yourself – and GamerNet, which lets you save and post your best rounds online. Couple this with more licensed golfers and courses than you can shake a three wood at and *Tiger* remains a thoroughly decent golf package. But, if you own *07*, this is just too similar to warrant buying. **Dave Meikleham**

PSM3 Verdict

A quality golf sim, but *EG5* takes the major this year.

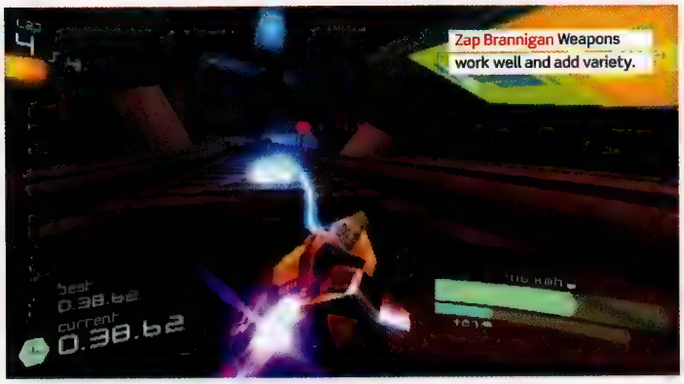
68

Crest of a wave All of Tiger's mannerisms have been recreated down to a tee. Tee? Yes? Yes? Oh.

Sony | PSP | Oct 26

WipEout Pulse

No danger of flatlining in this exciting racer



Developers take note – this is how games for PSP should be made. Keep the controls simple. Structure the action for short, sharp play sessions. And cater for PSP's criminally overlooked online functions. *WipEout Pulse* does all these. Furthering the online elements from *WipEout Pure*, the futuristic racer gives you the ability to host your own tournaments via Wi-Fi, and take and post snapshots from replays. Meanwhile, further tracks are promised for download after the game's release.

Need for speed

The racing itself remains tight and responsive, with a sense of speed that thrills. You manipulate your craft left and right with the shoulder buttons, which are used in conjunction with the analogue nub for tighter turns. It feels a little too sensitive at first, though, and it'll take several races to overcome the impulse to steer too much into corners. Weapons are available, but thankfully the menagerie of missiles and bombs that litter tracks are diverting, without ruining the purity of the racing.

It all looks stunning too. Clear, bold lines, a striking colour palette and a chic, minimalist design make *Pulse* as stylish as a postmodern German apartment. Couple this with over 20 new courses and a track designer to make new ones, and this is a worthwhile purchase, even if you've caned *Pure* till your eyes bled. If you can overlook the temporary arthritis that dogs extended play on most PSP racers, then this is exciting, impeccably designed stuff. **Dave Meikleham**

PSM3 Verdict

Gorgeous, fast and well suited to PSP. A great racer. **84**

Ubisoft | PS2 | Out now

Surf's Up

The surf may be up, but we're feeling down

Why exactly does a penguin need a surfboard? We'd have thought that its streamlined, oily physique would be better at navigating waves than a plank of wood. *Surf's Up* is best described as a cross between a simplified *SSX* and Nintendo's *Wave Race* series. Each race involves performing tricks on waves while navigating checkpoints. Tricks work fine, but erratic handling makes steering a pain, while bland water effects make you feel as though you're floating on some blue cardboard. Not totally charmless, but the sprogs would be better off with *SSX Tricky*. **Dave Meikleham** **51**

EA Sports | PS3 | October 5

NBA Live 08

NBA scores another basket

If you associate three points with a Saturday afternoon, pie and Bovril, you'll likely be baffled by *NBA 08*. The number of options, strategies and plays that can be changed on the fly are so comprehensive it's almost impenetrable if you lack a robust knowledge of the sport. B-ball fanatics will love it, though.

The animation is sumptuous, with the free dribbling handled on the right stick looking particularly organic. Offensive play is exciting, fast and fluid, but the defensive game feels limited in comparison – just like the real sport, it's difficult to win the ball back. If you're passionate about basketball, this is as comprehensive a sim as you could hope for. **Dave Meikleham** **76**

Vicious Cycle | PSP | October 5

Dead Head Fred

Not to be confused with Right Said

Essentially a cross between an action game and platformer, *Fred* is one of the most unique titles on PSP, thanks to a quirky atmosphere and fresh ideas. It succeeds due to imaginative action and a satisfying combat system.

Fred is basically Frankenstein's monster, but can swap his bonce for those of his enemies. And this is where the game uses some clever level interaction. Take the corpse head, for instance, which can be inflated with water or oil, to either put out fires or ignite them. Combat is fairly deep, with an array of special moves, finishers and counters, and it looks good, like it was ripped straight from a Tim Burton movie. Unfortunately, a stiff camera and fiddly platforming frustrate, but this still proves to be a unique, fun experience. **Dave Meikleham** **75**

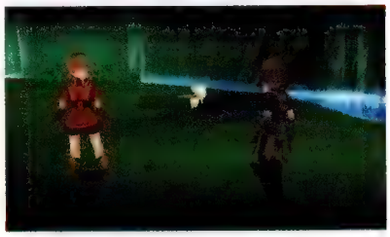
Namco | PSP | Out now

Tales Of The World: Radiant Mythology

It's not radiant, just decent

Why does every twee Japanese RPG have to throw in an annoying sidekick? If you can stomach your whiny Pikachu-like companion, then you'll find *Radiant Mythology* to be a solid, if not spectacular, addition to the genre.

The combat is mostly turn-based, although you have limited control over your characters' movements. It's simple – there aren't a huge amount of moves – but it looks and handles well enough to remain engaging. It's a big one too, with a decent item creation system, bold anime visuals and impressive voice work. It just lacks a strong personality or story (a tale of secret societies is the game's basic framework) to stand out from other RPGs. **Dave Meikleham** **62**



PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months

Warhawk
Sony | PS3
"No two matches are the same. It's a masterpiece of balance, of design, and it's the jewel in Sony's online crown. The perfect showcase for the Network."
PSM3 Rating 90%

Colin McRae: DiRT
Codemasters | PS3
"If you have any love for driving games whatsoever, you owe it to yourself to grab what will be, for many, PS3's best racing game to date. Great."
PSM3 Rating 88%

GRAW2
Ubisoft | PS3
"*Advanced Warfighter 2* is an almost flawlessly conceived and realised war simulator, giving an unparalleled sense of control over your units."
PSM3 Rating 86%

Brian Lara 2007

"A solid effort which caters well to the needs of PSP"

Koei | PS2 | Out now

Warriors Orochi

Tap @ till your thumb breaks

We reckon we'd be good military generals, because judging by *Orochi*, it only takes 500 taps of @ to win a battle. From the team behind *Dynasty Warriors*, this plays in a similar (i.e. identical) way – you fight hundreds of soldiers who can all be dispatched with three button presses. At least Koei have finally learned that feudal Japan wasn't permanently covered in fog, with *Orochi* displaying a decent draw distance. Still, the visuals are bland, but it's technically solid and throws more enemies at you than the eye and thumb can deal with.

Koei have tried to add variety to combat by giving you three characters in battle, who can be swapped between on the fly – but when you're only bashing two buttons there's only so much variety you can get. But there's more of a tactical edge to *Orochi* than *DW*, as you have to capture enemy camps while defending your own. It feels quite epic, but ultimately is more a war of repetition than attrition. Hugely samey and mostly joyless. **Dave Meikleham**

49

Codemasters | PSP | Out now

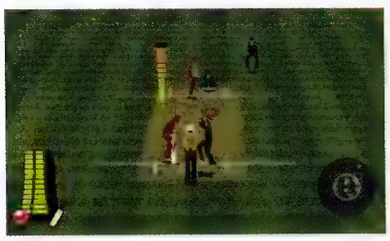
Brian Lara 2007: Pressure Play

Condensed cricket for short attention spans

Cricket isn't exactly designed for short handheld bursts, with test matches lasting days instead of minutes. Wisely, Codemasters have included Pressure Play in their first cricket game on PSP, which is basically a sort-of Challenge mode. Here, you try to meet requirements, like bowling a maiden over or hitting a set number of runs. It's a fun little mode, and with challenges only lasting minutes, it's well suited for handheld. There's also a World Cup mode for those looking for a more lengthy challenge.

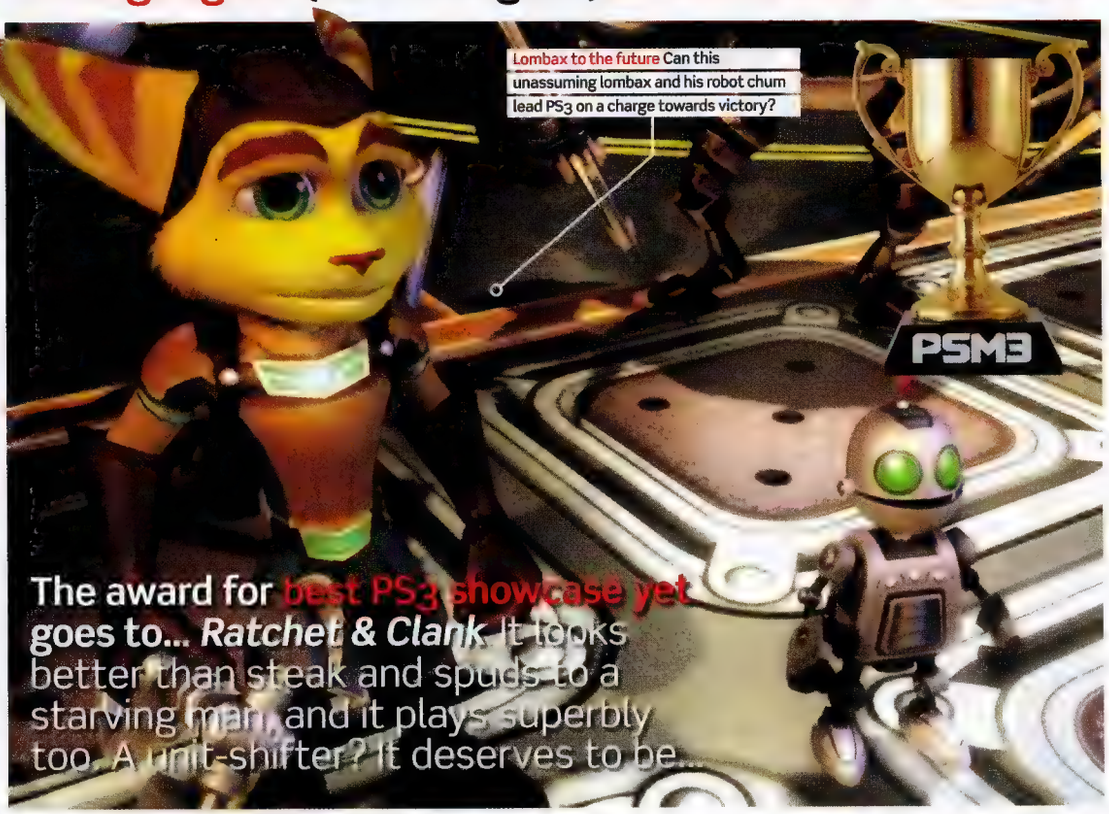
The actual action on the pitch is somewhat mixed, however. Bowling seems quite random – a bit like the real thing, then – and taking a wicket feels more like luck than skill. Batting fairs better and, once you get the timing down, you'll easily knock the AI for fours and sixes. Though the licensing is far from extensive – 'Andrew Flintaff', we're looking at you – this remains a solid effort, which caters pretty well for the needs of PSP play. Very nice. **Dave Meikleham**

70



PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews



Lombax to the future Can this unassuming lombax and his robot chum lead PS3 on a charge towards victory?

The award for best PS3 showcase yet goes to... ***Ratchet & Clank***. It looks better than steak and spuds to a starving man, and it plays superbly too. A unit-shifter? It deserves to be...

The ace of online award goes to...

Skate

Record all your most ludicrous/limb-breaking stunts and stick them up online? Brilliant. It's like a console version of YouTube, but with less pandas in tuxedos.

The other ace of online award goes to...

SingStar

The net will never be the same – it's about to be full of drunkards hollering tragically over Macy Gray's I Try. The ranking feature assures cruel instant judgement.

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Zombie Hunter 2 Essential

"Control three sets of sisters as you slice and dice zombies with cool attacks". Who's got these attacks? The sisters or the zombies? We quite like the sound of this, mind.

Covert Command Essential

From the press release... "A true solider faces danger alone! Tough your way out of 30 blood-and-sweat inducing missions. Be carfull!" You heard – take car, solider... Good grief.

Hi-Score Table

☐	Ratchet & Clank	p22 93%
☐	Skate	p60 91%
☐	Final Fantasy Tactics	p82 89%
☐	FIFA 08	p76 85%
☐	WipEout Pulse	p84 84%
☐	SingStar	p68 81%
☐	Sega Rally	p66 79%
☐	Stranglehold	p70 78%
☐	NHL 08	p83 77%
☐	NBA Live 08	p84 76%
☐	Dead Head Fred	p84 75%
☐	Brian Lara Pressure Play	p85 70%
☐	Folklore	p80 69%
☐	Tiger Woods 08	p83 68%
☐	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	p83 67%
☐	Heavenly Sword	p74 65%
☐	Tales Of The World	p84 62%
☐	Grim Grimoire	p83 59%
☐	Creature Feature	p82 54%
☐	Lair	p78 54%
☐	Surf's Up	p84 51%
☐	Trials Of Topoq	p82 51%
☐	Warriors Orochi	p85 49%
☐	Alien Syndrome	p83 45%
☐	Aqua Vita	p82 N/A

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CELEBRATE

88 WWE wrestles PS2 into submission
Every PS2 wrestling game, including the stupid one with cars.

GENIUS

90 The 10 most amazing moments in *Dragon Quest*
We played for 200 hours so you don't have to.

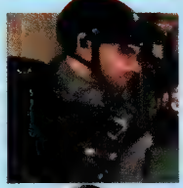
EXPLOITS

94 25 mad moves in *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*
The most insane beat-'em-up on PS2, ripped apart for your pleasure.

SECRETS

96 Exploring your sexuality in *Yakuza*
Hey, that stripper is totally hot. What? Whaddya mean, '*bloke*'?

CHEATS



97 PlayStation's dark secrets exposed
With a *Heavenly Sword/ God Of War* crossover, and *R6 Vegas* cheats.

ONLINE

98 Taking the war online in *GRAW2*
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 – the best online PS3 shooter yet?

CLASSIC

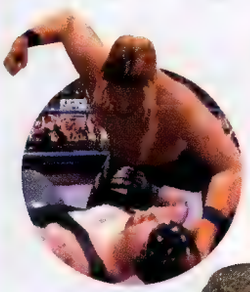
100 *Gradius V* – the hardest, greatest shoot-'em-up ever
Tears of anger mix with tears of joy. Be involved.

NATION

102 *MGS4*'s bosses to be supermodels
Will this page star girls *again* next time? The smart money's on 'yes'.

Getting in the ring with WWE

With *SmackDown vs Raw 2008* debuting on PS3 next month, now's as good a time as any to look back on the series' highs and lows from the last decade. Join us on a rollercoaster ride through the heart of Grapland...

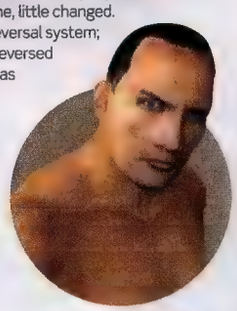


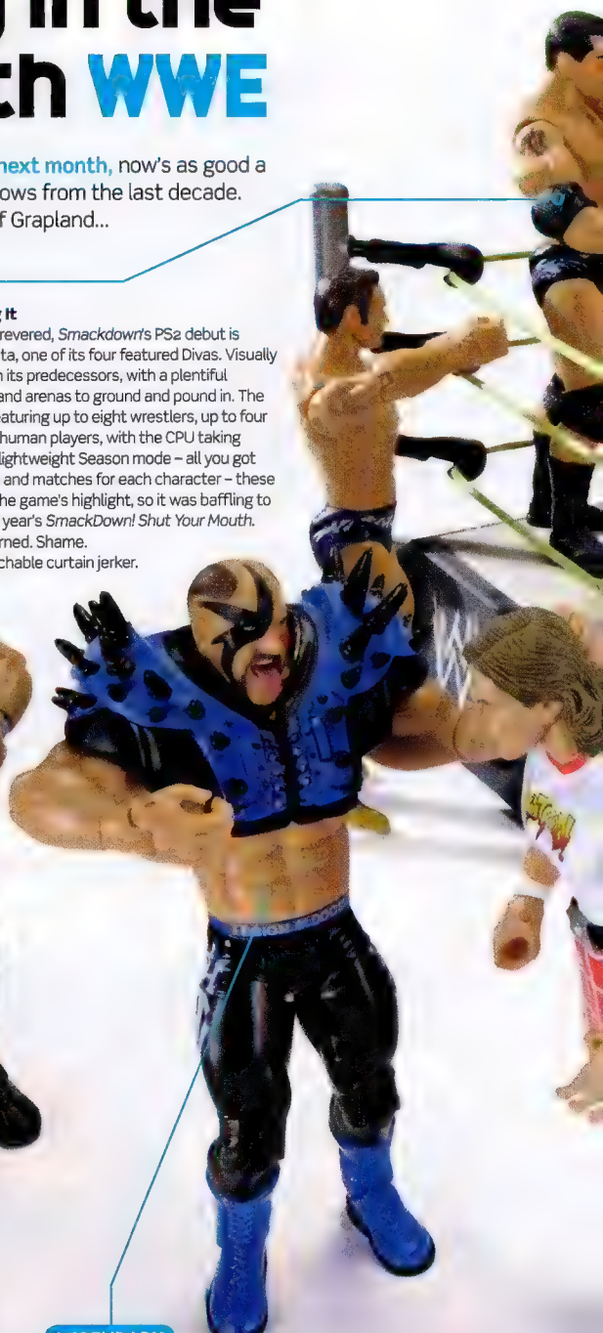
ROUND ONE

WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It
Although the series came to be revered, *Smackdown!*'s PS2 debut is underappreciated – a little like Lita, one of its four featured Divas. Visually it was an inevitable step up from its predecessors, with a plentiful supply of smooth moves and grand arenas to ground and pound in. The big new feature was matches featuring up to eight wrestlers, up to four of whom could be controlled by human players, with the CPU taking charge of the remainder. With a lightweight Season mode – all you got was a couple of backstage skits and matches for each character – these eight-way marathons were the game's highlight, so it was baffling to see them dropped for next year's *SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth*. Indeed, they've never returned. Shame.
Verdict A watchable curtain jerker.

TAKING CONTROL

WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth
After a lengthy 'debate' with the World Wildlife Fund, 2002 saw the McMahon crew become World Wrestling Entertainment – and this was the new company's first game. Yet despite the new name, little changed. The best tweak was the new reversal system; in previous games, tapping ⓡ reversed nearly everything. Now there was actually some skill involved in countering opponents' moves: you had to match his D-pad press. So if he hit ↑ and ◎, you had to hit ↑ and ◎ to successfully reverse the move. This was also the first ever WWE game to feature Stacy Keibler's never-ending legs and shapely rear.
Verdict Title contender.





LEGENDARY

WWE SmackDown! Here Comes The Pain
A biggie, this. Some argue that *Here Comes The Pain* marked the final point before *SmackDown* swam into 'annual update' territory. The major addition was an Elimination Chamber match, where six wrestlers were placed in a huge, circular steel structure and invited to shellack the snot out of one another. Legends of the '80s and '90s like Legion Of Doom, Roddy Piper and Iron Sheik were included, while the new ratings system – with ranks for Speed, Strength, Stamina, Technique and Submissions – helped change the game from arcade button-basher to dedicated sim.
Verdict Undisputed champion

BROKEN ENGINE

WWE Crush Hour

More-bonkers-than-Umaga racing combat game featuring 20-something WWE superstars. Instead of pedigrees and Rock Bottoms, your main weapons were side-mounted lasers and rocket launchers. And while we'd love to see Triple H pootle down to the ring at the Royal Rumble in a modded Beetle, all this proved was that wrestlers and cars shouldn't mix. *Crush Hour* featured a roster of larger-than life monster vehicles, but handling them felt tame – and the tasks involved things like holding onto a belt for 30 seconds while rivals tried to ram it away from you, were equally shallow.

Verdict Bound-for-Heat comedy act.

THE FUTURE

WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008

There's no question that the series' PS3 debut will be the best looking *SmackDown* yet, but it's the gameplay features which will make or break it on next-gen. The new Extreme Rules Match – where you actual get to select your weapon of choice when peering under the ring – is undeniably riotous, but really it's just a revision of the Hardcore matches found in previous games. And will it be too difficult for beginners? In the past, *SmackDown* was easy for newbies: D-pad and ⊗ for strikes, D-pad and ◎ for grapple moves. Now there's a lengthy learning process required for any SmackDown newbie, one only likely to get more complex this time around, and long-term that could prove to be the series' downfall.

Verdict Mid-card certainty.

BANK ON IT

WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007

After last year's Casket craziness, *SvRo7* introduced another epic new match type – the Money In The Bank ladder match. At WrestleMania, this usually steals the show as wrestlers batter each other with said ladder, trying to be the man who earns a title shot by nabbing a briefcase dangling high above the ring. In videogame form, it's awful. 'Weakening' the briefcase enough for it to be released takes an eternity – we've had matches lasting over an hour – and there aren't enough ladder moves to keep it interesting for more than the opening five minutes.

Verdict Count-out loser

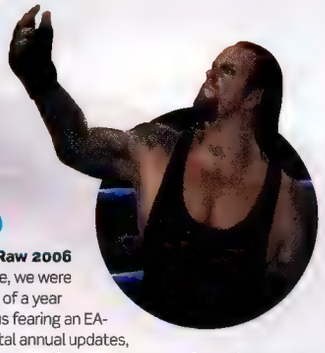
BRA WARS

WWE SmackDown vs Raw

In an attempt to mirror WWE's real life brand split, the moniker now incorporated both shows – but previous games had always featured the entire roster, so it didn't change much. Indeed, the gameplay was slightly inferior to previous outings. The developer's focus appeared to have been placed upon online play, but it was underwhelming like a match between Snitsky and Lashley. Net contests could only feature two players and were limited to either a singles match or a Bra And Panties match. The latter was the game's other big addition: Lita, Stacy, Trish Stratus, Torrie Wilson and friends could now be made to fight to their underwear. While we may have had a sneaky thrill over Miss Keibler when she made her series debut, seeing these virtual ladies stripped to their digitised underwear made us – and the game's fans – feel all dirty. And not in a pleasant, imagine-all-those-things-we'd-like-to-do-to-Trish kind of way.

Verdict Legend on the wane.

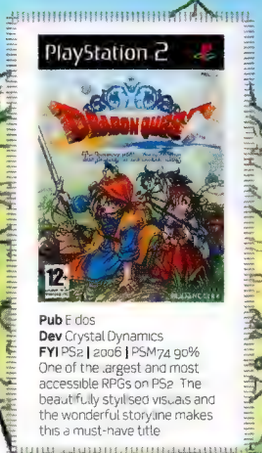
GRAVE MISTAKE



WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2006

Ahead of *SvRo6*'s release, we were concerned. The addition of a year number in the title had us fearing an EA-style series of incremental annual updates, but in fact this particular grap effort was a return to form. That wasn't because of the new match type, though, the tongue-twistingly named Buried Alive Casket Match, an Undertaker speciality. This actually turned out to be a miserable-to-play war of attrition in which it often took more than half an hour to successfully 'bury' your opponent. Better were the minor tweaks to the actual wrestling engine, including the addition of power Irish whips, sleeper holds, and chain wrestling – where two grapplers could pull off a string of counters and reversals.

Verdict Number one contender.



Pub Eidos
Dev Crystal Dynamics
FYI PS2 | 2006 | PSM74 90%
One of the largest and most accessible RPGs on PS2. The beautifully stylised visuals and the wonderful storyline makes this a must-have title

10 reasons why Dragon Quest is much more than just another RPG

PLAYSTATION GENIUS

Nathan Irvine

Angelo The ever debonair fella can be cocky and arrogant but you'll warm to him over his tragic history.

King Trode and Medea The story's all about lifting the curse off this green bloke and his daughter, the horse.

The Hero Orphaned as a baby, the mute hero (you decide his name) is fluent in the language of 'kick ass'.

Jessica The token lady of the gang, she's a mean whip and even has a sexy bunny girl outfit too. Nice.

Yangus The muscle of the party is as thick as his helmet but he'll do anything to protect his buddies.

1 ALL-STAR BAND OF HEROES

It's rare to find a group of characters that you'll love as much as *Dragon Quest's* lead stars. They're a really individual bunch with their own unique personalities. You can't help but root for them.

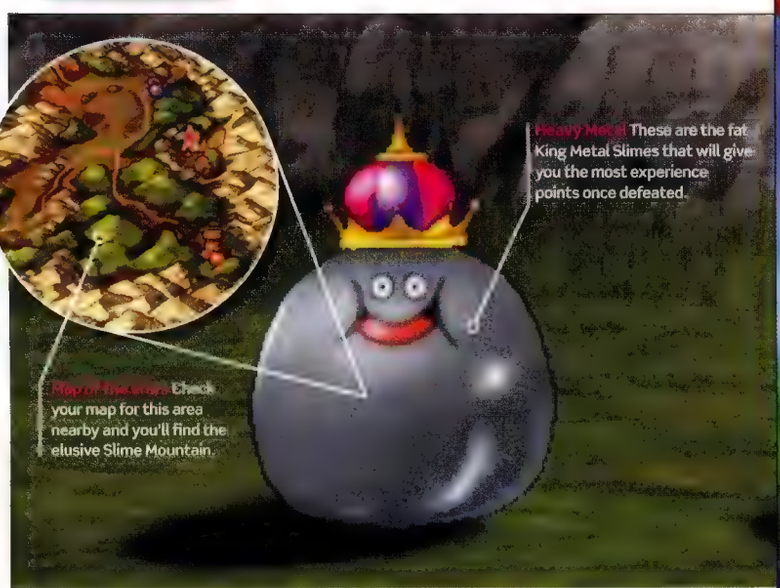
3 FINDING MINNIE'S MEDALS

Losing a few precious family heirlooms is understandable, but mislaying 110 valuable coins is just plain careless. Suffice to say, the royal family expect you to find them again, though they will reward you with rare weapons and armour. The simple side-quest soon develops into an obsession as you clamber down wells, prise open treasure chests or manically smash up people's homes just to find one more.

Medals of Honour This is what you're looking for, albeit smaller versions hidden around the world.
Royal Meals The King of Medals is tucked up in bed ill until you complete the game then he's back on his throne.

2 DEVELOP A GAMBLING HABIT

The super casino, located in the town of Baccarat, is *the* place to spend your hard earned tokens. Roulette tables, bingo and 100 token slot machines are here to ensure you get bitten by the gambling bug – and why not when there's so much unique stuff to play for? After all, this is the place to pick up Jessica's best weapon, the Gringham whip. So what if you lose everything – you can always hit 'restart'.


Heavy Metal These are the fat King Metal Slimes that will give you the most experience points once defeated.
Map of Baccarat Check your map for this area nearby and you'll find the elusive Slime Mountain.

4 LEVEL UP ON SLIME MOUNTAIN

Every RPG reaches a point where levelling-up becomes a desperate affair but you'll find an easier option here. Obtain the Godbird's Soulstone, which lets you fly, then soar up to Slime Mountain. With perseverance you'll unearth Standard, Liquid or King Metal Slimes; they'll try to flee battles but if you're quick to take them out you'll be rewarded with thousands of experience points per kill. Handy, eh?

5 GETTING AROUND

With a world as vast as *Dragon Quest's* you're going to need some transport to get about the place. So how about going down to the shops on your very own sabre-tooth cat? Or what about captaining a flying galleon ship? You can even glide around in bird form, which gives you spectacular views and allows you to get somewhere fast. There's also a clever teleporting trick that allows you to revisit places in an instant. With all these modes you'll be able to save the soles of your +15 leather boots.

ON THE DISC
Watch for *White Knight Story* from DQ team Level 5 soon

6 RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

As with all good RPGs, you'll be tasked with cooking up some brand-new objects for your adventure through the medium of alchemy. Searching bookshelves or talking to villagers and the like, will reveal a range of delicious recipes that Jamie Oliver would be proud of. Weapons, armour and life-saving medicines can all be rustled up. Early on, your concoctions take a while to cook but later you'll get a super pot that mixes things up immediately.

Cook-off Pick the right combinations and you're rewarded with unique items.

Leader of attack There's only one command you can give to your team, and that's 'attack'.

7 MONSTER TEAMS

There's a Fight Club style area where monster hunters pit their beasts against one another. You recruit these creatures – who are loitering about the outside world – by beating them in battle and then you can use them in the arena to fight for prizes. One such award allows you to call on your team(s) when confronted in your day-to-day scrapping, meaning you don't have to waste your magic or health. If you assemble a team with similar skills then they'll be more powerful or even meld into one super monster.

Lord knows This is the Lord of the Dragovians. He looks soft but he's absolute nails.

Alter it This is the gateway to the Dragovian sanctuary that opens at the end of the game.

8 ACE STORY AND CAST

With a cast consisting of Morwenna Banks (Sexondale), Victoria Shalet (CBBC's The Queen's Nose) and the Geordie bloke from I'm Alan Partridge, it's no wonder that the dialogue ticks along nicely. A genuinely heart-warming story of fairytale proportions sees the once orphaned lad become the hero, save the day and rescue the love of his life punctuated by the seamless vocal skills of its C-list celebrites. If ever a game deserved a BAFTA for script and voice-acting then it's *Dragon Quest*.

Cheesy plot This little fella is part of a big twist at the end but we won't spoil it for you.

s the spicy cheese!

9 THE STORY CONTINUES...

After 100+ hours of solid questing and an epic final battle with Rhapthorne, you'd expect the game to be over, right? Wrong. After the credits roll, the Dragon Altar (pictured) is shown with its eyes glinting. Load your last saved game and head up there to be transported to the Dragovian world for another ten hours or more playtime, a shocking plot twist and an even happier ending. Brilliant.

The ones we didn't pick...

Treasure hunting
Scouring the land for boxes of goodies will bring out an OCD in you. Couple this with the fact that you can ransack people's homes to find new objects and weapons and you've got a whole new unofficial side-quest to get stuck into.

Spells and skills
There's a massive range of unique spells that you have at your disposal. From Ka-thwack that will kill an enemy instantly if it hits to Yangus' Underpant Dance, which dazes your opponent, you'll never get bored of seeing them. Plus, there are loads of skills that will aid your quests too.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

10

SUPERB CHARACTERS

A whimsical world that's bursting with colour is also packed with some of the the most original character design you've ever seen. Akira Toriyama – the man behind the Dragon Ball Z TV series – created every hero, villian and landscape in *Dragon Quest* and the results are gorgeous, with each one beautifully detailed in all its cel-shaded glory. The colourful cast of doodling baby squids, soul-singing mole men and even a set of peppers stuck on a skewer flicking the 'bird' are just fantastic.

ON THE DISC
Like 2D scrappers? Tekken 5 online is on the disc

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

Pull mental moves in Marvel Vs Capcom 2

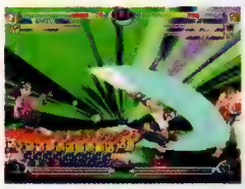
Joel Snape

Key
QCB = Quarter-circle back | KK = Both kicks | PP = Both punches | QCF = Quarter-circle forward | HCF = Half-circle forward | HCB = Half-circle backwards | LP = Light punch | F = Forward | LK = Light kick | HP = Hard punch

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

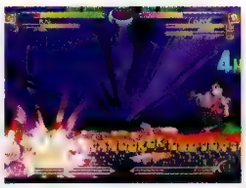
Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom
FYI PS2 | 2002 | PSM29 84%
While other fighting games demand more and more elaborate button combos, *MvC2* makes things simple. The real skill is calling team-mates at the right time, tagging out when you're tired... and mastering some of the most insane Super moves in fighting game history

KNOCKOUT The 25 most insane Super moves



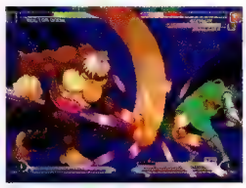
Super moves are easy to do: they're typically just a quarter-turn of the stick combined with both punch or kick buttons. The trick is knowing which ones hit in which directions and doing them when your opponent's vulnerable.

Jill's Code... QCB+KK
In normal play Jill can call up crows, undead dogs and flaming zombies, but there's more than 'just' that: hit an enemy with this, and the Resi Tyrant comes out to play.

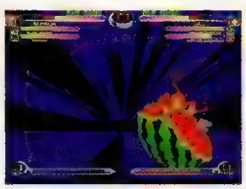


Tron Bonne's Chuushoku Rush... QCF+PP
Tron's a villain from Megaman, where her 'thing' was being followed around by a retinue of 40 miniature Servbots. Here she uses her gun to give them a target.

Tron Bonne's King Servbot... QCB+PP
Tron's got a Servbot following her around, and in this Super she yells "Servbot GO!" and looks on as he grows to a huge size and attacks you with a squeaky hammer.

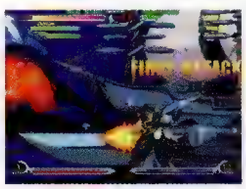


Sonson's Monkey King... QCF+KK
Sonson simply turns into an enormous, fire-breathing ape. Useless on its own, but very handy for chaining together with other combos.

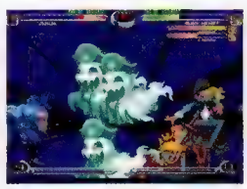


Sonson's POW... QCF+KK
Sonson fires the word "Pow" out of her mouth. If it connects, her opponent turns into a giant gooseberry – and she eats them, then spits them out as a seed. Yes.

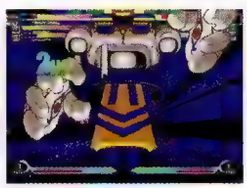
Sonson's Tenchi Tsuukan... QCF+PP
Sonson's based on the lead character from the Chinese fable Journey To The West – hence her ability to turn her staff into a tree-sized missile. (Read the fable.)



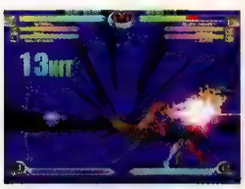
Ruby Heart's Pirate Knell... QCF+KK
Specially created for *MvC2*, Ruby's a pirate. So she's got a ship, right? Yeah, a ship with cannons and a massive bayonet available for summoning.



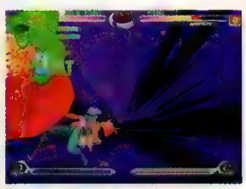
Ruby Heart's Milles Fantomes... QCB+KK
Ruby summons up a treasure chest, but there's a twist: it's full of ghosts. Ghost pirates, in fact, who'll cling to her opponent and sap their strength. Odd.



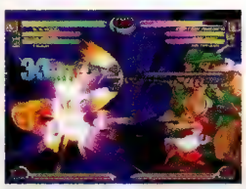
Anakaris' Pharaoh Magic... LP,LP,f,LK,HP
Anakaris – the mummy from *Darkstalkers* – grows to massive proportions and engulfs the screen. You control his hands, and squash your opponent like a bug.



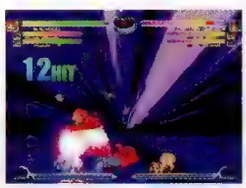
Spiral's Metamorphosis... QCB+PP
Simple, but terrifying – Spiral closes the distance on her opponent, then turns into every other Marvel character in the game for one hit each.



The Hulk's Gamma Smash... QCF+KK
The Hulk can rip up the floor and cause earthquakes, but if he gets really angry he'll leap into space, grab a chunk of asteroid and divebomb onto your head.

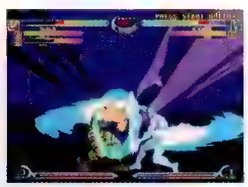


BB Hood's Cool Hunting... QCF+PP
BB whistles up some of her pals – a pair of giant-sized hunters – and they whip out blunderbusses to do player two a mischief. Surely that's cheating?

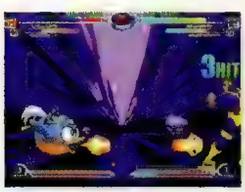


BB Hood's Hyper Apple For You... HCB+KK
BB trips over, but it's a sting – if she lands on another player she'll empty an Uzi into them, then leap away while she flings explosive apples out of her basket.

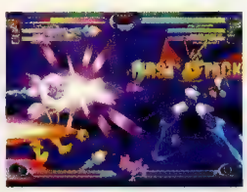
Cable's Hyper Viper... QCF+PP
It always amazes us that characters can use guns, but Cable takes the biscuit – *all* his strong punches involve shooting, and his Super does 59 hits of laser damage.



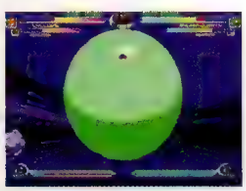
Guile's Hyper Boom... QCF+PP
Guile whirls out a sonic boom that surrounds his entire body and sucks opponents in. One of the few Supers that can hit an opponent who's behind you.



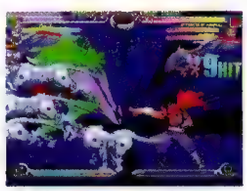
Megaman's Beat Plane... QCB+KK
Megaman summons up a plane in the shape of a small robotic duck, then uses it to rocket his opponents senseless. Of course he does.



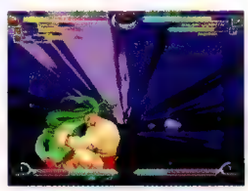
Megaman's Hyper Rockman... QCF+PP
Megaman – Rockman in Japan, remember – turns into a gigantic robot and launches missiles, birds and some small, friendly robotic dogs at his adversaries.



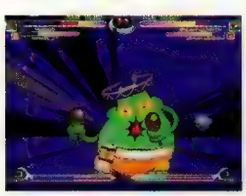
Shuma Gorath's Another Dimension... QCF+PP
The Marvel bad-lad – um, octopus – envelops his opponent like silly putty, then explodes around them, doing a relatively low amount of damage.



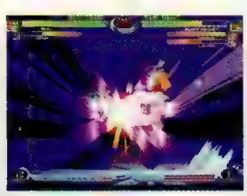
Strider Hiryu's Legion... QCF+KK
Strider's full of nods to his platforming past: he can climb walls and summon drones, but his best move involves unleashing robotic tigers and eagles.



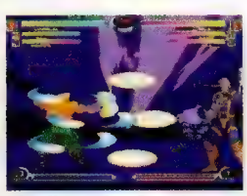
Zangief's Hyper Piledriver... 720°+PP
Zangief's Super is always difficult and here it's this: two twirls of the stick net you a finisher that includes three flying suplexes and spinning piledrivers.



Amingo's Plant Commandment... QCF+PP
Amingo's a cactus who's after the man destroying the world's plant life. And if you get him angry, he'll trap you in his belly while he plays the maracas for a bit.



Ryu's Hyper Hurricane... QCB+KK
The Shinkyu hadoken's the go-to Super, but for big damage you'll want to hit this: the hurricane sucks them in, and the kick clatters them about doing up to 30 hits.



Charlie's rain of Sonic Booms... QCF+PP
Charlie – Guile's one-time friend and teacher – doesn't stop at one sonic boom. He throws 20. Call in Guile to do his sonic boom assist for something really special.

Venom's Web... QCF+PP
Doing whatever a spider can, Venom spins a web and catches his opponent in it. Then he slices them up with his claws. OK, that's not *entirely* like a spider.

Cyclops' Super Optic Blast... QCF+PP
As you'd expect of someone who likes blasting things with his eye, Cyclops does it a lot. But it's rarely better than when he fills the screen with red-o-vision.

MvC FAQ

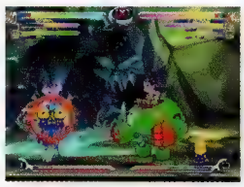
Q Why are they all fighting?
A [illegible]

Q Is there an easy way to unlock everyone?
A [illegible]

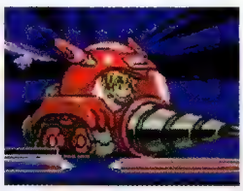
GameAmmo

"Capcom only released a limited number of copies of *MvC2*, so it's now quite rare"

WEIRD The five most obscure stars



Rather than including anyone actually popular, Capcom used *MvC2* as a chance to resurrect some of their creakiest stars and give them insane, tenuously-related-to-their-persona-moves.



Odd... Roll
Created as a domesto-bot counterpart to Megaman, Roll's since evolved into one of the series' most loved characters. She's slow, but can turn into a gigantic robot.

Odd... Captain Commando
Capcom's brief attempt at a mascot can summon characters from his own beat-'em-up: Ginzu (the ninja), Mack The Knife (the mummy) and Hoover (the baby).

Odd... BB Hood
Known as Bulleta in Japan, Hood's actually an undercover agent who hunts *Darkstalkers* for cash, using her sweet demeanour to commit horrible murders.

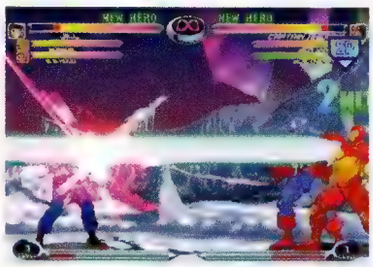
Odd... Sonson
Sonson's the granddaughter of the title character in a Turbo-Grafx game. She's based on the same character as Monkey and *Dragon Ball Z*'s Son Goku.

Odd... Marrow
Marrow was a little-known Marvel character. Why little known? Because her power is controlling bones. That's right, she can summon *massive bones*.

FRIENDLY The four best assist moves

Assist 1 Sonson has perhaps the nicest assist in the game – she comes on and offers you a cherry, which restores the red bit of your life bar if you manage to grab it. Aw.

Assist 2 BB Hood goes for the more vicious approach, firing a bazooka out of her little basket. It's always handy to have a projectile character in your team.

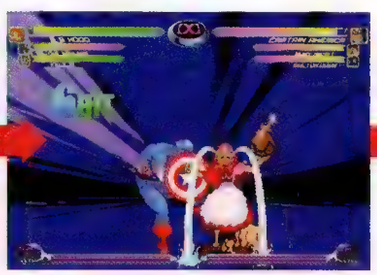


Assist 3 Beam assists are even better, because they'll annihilate any rival projectiles, letting you dash in behind them – as Iron Man demonstrates here...

Assist 4 But the best assist in the game is Jill Valentine's. Referencing *Resi* again, she offers you a herb – and it even brings up a little cardiogram if you take it. Delightful.

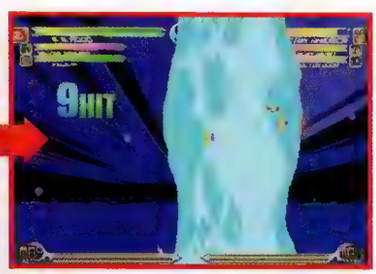
TERRIFYING The best move in the game

Knit one, stab one... First, BB tearfully remembers her dead granny 'Obaaa-saaan!' she yelps, blubbering uncontrollably – stabbing her opponent as the old dear looks on from above.



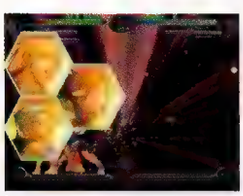
Crying pain With her opponent reeling from the multiple puncture wounds, BB continues to jet tears like Gwyneth Paltrow chopping an onion. Steady on, love.

Need a lift? Drying her eyes, the little scamp recovers from her grief quickly and hoists her hapless opponent skyward, then lobs him at the ground...

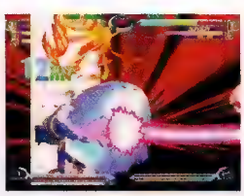


Streak of Miss The impact of the drop causes a massive vertical wave and poor old Captain America sploshes into the pool of salty tears. Glub.

WONDERFUL How to do a hyper-combo

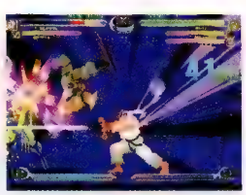


It's easy: prod ⓜ + ⓜ, and all three of your characters (two if you've only got a level two gauge) will leap onto the screen and unleash their best attacks. The trick is knowing how best to use them.



Step 1... Do your research
First, you need to learn what everyone does. Some have Super moves they never use in normal play: others use their worst moves in a team-up.

Step 2... Screen fillers
One tactic is to use three moves that'll hit your opponent wherever they go: Ken's Shinryu Reppa, Sakura's fireball and Cyclops' Super Optic Blast are all good.

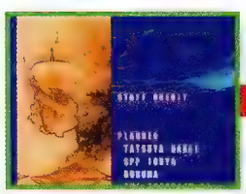


Step 3... Team work
Take Ryu, Guile and Wolverine: Ryu's Shinkyu Hadoken dazes them, the Sonic Boom sucks them in and Wolvie connects with a Hyper Beserker Barrage.

Step 4... Follow-up
Everybody can block the Hulk's Gamma Crush, but if you hit them with Ryu's quicker Shinkyuu Hadoken first, they won't be able to.

Step 5... Take a gamble
You can also delay your supers – by triggering a second or third with a twirl of the stick. This takes keen timing, though, and tends to go badly wrong.

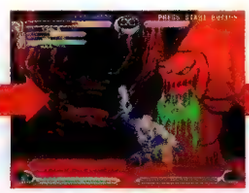
RUBBISH How to beat Abyss



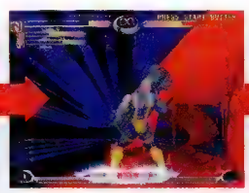
Abyss is probably one of the laziest-designed bosses in history – but that doesn't mean beating him is a stroll in the park. If you want to trounce him, we'd suggest a team of Ken, Guile and Cable.

Form One... Horny
Armour Abyss is easy to beat, but the trick is doing it without super moves. Block everything and use short Dragon Punches to get over him.

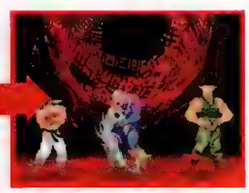
Form Two... Blobby
Brilliant, Capcom: a giggling snot-man with a miniature flamethrower. If you've got enough juice here, this is a cakewalk: just use 'beam' supers from afar.



Form Three... Nasty
Duck-block often and use crouching attacks to hit Abyss when he comes near. Ken's cannon fodder here – use him to give your other boys breathing space.



Form Four... Balls
When Abyss is off-screen, you can hit the aerial sphere with Guile's super flash kick. It's easier to use Cable's beam super, which connects for a monster combo.



Form Five... Boom
With the big red monster done, your team's won it. Now sit back and enjoy the same half-arsed concept-art ending no matter what team you picked.

ON THE DISC
Watch Heavenly Sword on this month's disc

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Battling a transvestite stripper assassin in Yakuza

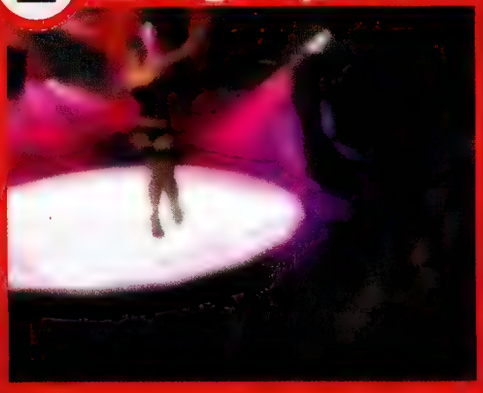
(Very) cross-dresser
The thing about *Yakuza* that few people ever get to see is that it's very much a 'Sega' game underneath all that somewhat clumsy battling and roaming – its corners are packed with colourful, silly touches that make you glad you put the effort in. And none are quite as silly as this: when lead character Kazuma Kiryu turns up at the game's strip club, he's given much more than an eyeful. There's something not right about the 'woman' who's just taken to the stage... those awkward dance moves... the bulky cheekbones and... an Adam's apple? And a shotgun, suddenly whipped out from within 'her' outfit? It's an assassination attempt on Kazuma's life, from a hitman who will obviously do whatever's needed to get close to his target. You'd never see Agent 47 donning a blonde wig and sexy duds, that's for sure.

"Kazuma is given much more than an eyeful"

1 Sunset strip

Booty call At the start of the game's fourth chapter, you'll get a phone call from Yuya asking you to nip along to his strip club to catch a freebie performance. It's a side quest that's completely optional, by the way. But we strongly advise you not to miss it...

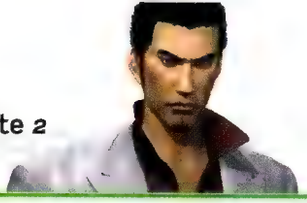
2 In a tight spot



Hot to trot Since Yuya's true enough to his word, you'll be privy to a rather 'pleasing' show from one of his best girls. Once that's over, you'll have the chance to stay and catch the next act. Go on, then. Solving the disputes of the crim underworld can wait five minutes.

3 She's a he!

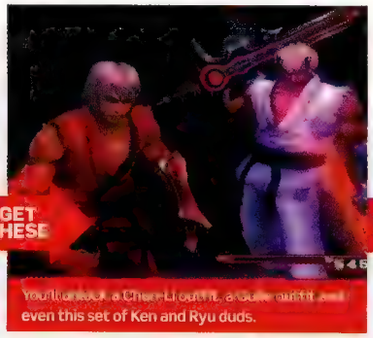
Arthur Vs Martha You'll fall straight into a rather kinky honeytrap – an attempt on your life. Didn't your mother warn you about this kind of stuff? You've now got an angry, shotgun-toting trannie on your hands. Best tear up the joint and kick the ladyman's head in.



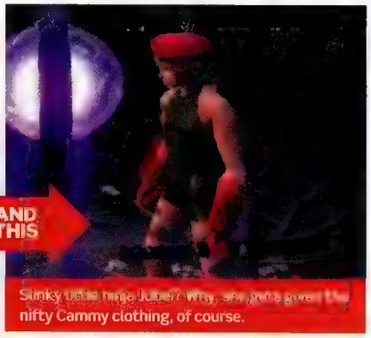
PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

Unlockables › **Onimusha: Dawn Of Dreams** › *Street Fighter* costumes

Complete the game with a certain character to unlock *Street Fighter* costumes.



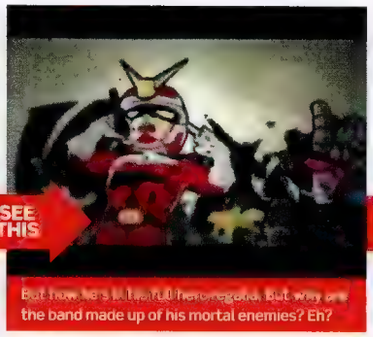
You'll unlock a Chun-Li outfit, a Guile outfit and even this set of Ken and Ryu duds.



Slinky ninja Jubei? Why, she gets given the nifty Cammy clothing, of course.

Secret music vid › **Viewtiful Joe** › Let's dance

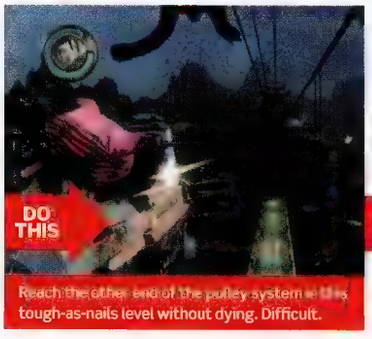
Finish it and you'll get this trailer and Viewtiful Joe rocking the Fred Durst look.



But how he's in the VJ heroine gang, but why are the band made up of his mortal enemies? Eh?

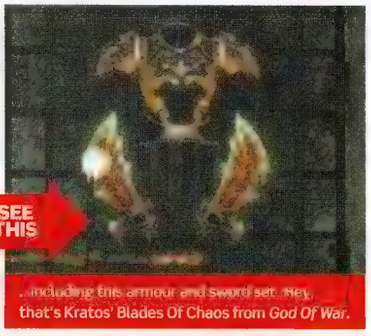
And then the bats do some skateboarding tricks. Take that, Hawk. It's all decidedly odd, really.

Easter egg › **Heavenly Sword** › Kratos' armour



Reach the other end of the pulley system at this tough-as-nails level without dying. Difficult.

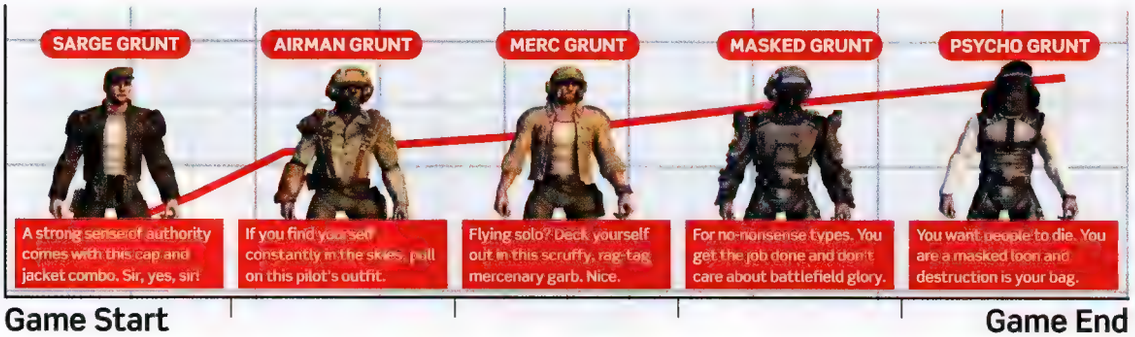
At the other side you'll find King Bohan's treasure stash. It's full of mythical items...



...including this armour and sword set. Hey, that's Kratos' Blades Of Chaos from *God Of War*.

From zero to hero in... Warhawk

Rise in rank, earn new togs. These are our personal favourites...


SARGE GRUNT
AIRMAN GRUNT
MERC GRUNT
MASKED GRUNT
PSYCHO GRUNT
A strong sense of authority comes with this cap and jacket combo. Sir, yes, sir!
If you find yourself constantly in the skies, pull on this pilot's outfit.
Flying solo? Deck yourself out in this scruffy, rag-tag mercenary garb. Nice.
For no-nonsense types. You get the job done and don't care about battlefield glory.
You want people to die. You are a masked loon and destruction is your bag.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

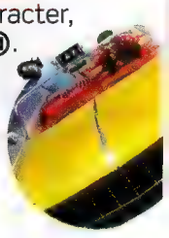
Cheats you *must* know

1 Rainbow Six Vegas
One-hit kills
Pause the game, then hold down L2 and press L3, R3, L3, R3, ⊗, ◎, L3, R3, L3, R3, □, △.

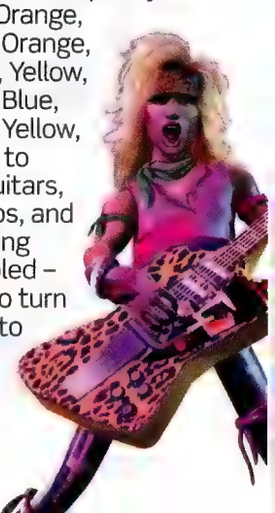
2 Surf's Up
Unlock all multi-player levels
Enter 'MULTIPASS' to unlock all multi-player levels.

3 NASCAR 08
Unlock All Fantasy Drivers
Enter 'RACE THE PACK' as a code to unlock all fantasy drivers.

4 Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars
Another Day mode
While selecting a character, press □, then hold □. This introduces new fare locations.



5 Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks The '80s
Unlock everything
At the main menu, quickly press Blue, Orange, Yellow, Red, Orange, Yellow, Blue, Yellow, Red, Yellow, Blue, Yellow, Red, Yellow, Blue, Yellow to unlock all guitars, songs, videos, and cheats. Saving will be disabled – you'll have to turn off the PS2 to disable the effect.



ON THE DISC
See a *Ghost Recon* developer diary on this month's disc

PLAYSTATION ONLINE

Taking out the enemies of freedom online in GRAW2

Leon Hurley

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM3 86%
Near future techno-war beckons. The offline blend of military realism and accessible trigger-tapping battles transfer neatly into multiplayer matches. A far more tangible threat of death creates a slower pace as you cautiously sweep though maps, although there's plenty of act on when it all 'goes loud'

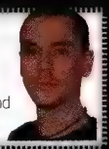
Nothing gets your pulse racing like *GRAW2* online. *Call Of Duty 3* and *Resistance* are great, but they do feel as though you're running around the back garden with Supersoakers at times. This, on the other hand, offers a far tenser challenge. A handful of bullets will finish you off, so it's heart-in-mouth stuff as you peek nervously around corners, searching for the enemy. Even with infinite respawns a crackle of gunfire will have you pulling your head back in like a spring-loaded turtle. Play it in ultra-realistic, dead-means-dead mode – with *no* respawns – and it's terrifying.

We all stand together

What really makes this satisfying, though, is the teamwork. You can't rush around like a madman – one-man armies have brief, messy lives. So in team games you have to cooperate: gathering at corners, watching each other's back or shouting out enemy locations. One key mechanic is the ability to heal fallen comrades. Anyone can fix up a wounded team-mate and it's amazing how often someone risks their neck to save yours, running out to help as you lie writhing, helpless, in the dirt.

The only thing that spoils it is that actually getting a game can be murder. You can't join a match in progress, you have to wait for the next round. And bouts can last anywhere between five minutes to an hour. You can't even watch the action – you just have to stare patiently at the lobby screen until the next session starts. It's infuriating. Fortunately, when you *do* get a game going there's almost no lag or drop out. A huge range of options further reward all the hanging around. Solo and team matches cover all the usual suspects: Deathmatches, CTF and territorial battles. Plus there are co-op matches, pitching everyone against AI enemies to complete objectives and missions. It's a shame getting a session can be so trying because, otherwise, this is probably one of the best online offers on PS3's platter right now.

ONLINE VERDICT



Lots of players? Plenty of games, although certain modes are quiet.
Buy it just for online? Enough maps and game types to keep you busy for ages

GAMEPLAY Defining moment

There's a lot to take in during the chaos of a 16-player team Deathmatch. However the Crosscom HUD makes keeping track of everything a breeze.

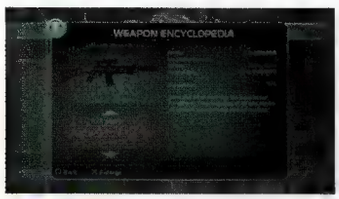
A few bullets mean finito. The health meter should go green, orange and red but it usually skips orange. And red. The figure tells you your posture. It's easy to lose track and be upright in a firefight

Every player on your team has a camera and you can cycle between them using ← and → on the D-pad. It's useful for seeing what's happening on the battlefield, and by holding L2 you can zoom in for a closer look.

Orange markers are important. In this case, it's a fallen team-mate you can heal. But you can also set a marker to direct your team to a certain point, or call for help, highlighting your cowardly ass to all.

CHOICES Get the best...

There are loads of options to choose from in *GRAW2*, from different soldier classes to weapons and maps. Here are the best ones in the game to get you off to a flying start. Just tell 'em PSM3 sent you.



1 Rifle
There are 60 guns in *GRAW2* if you count the Zeus-MPAR rocket launcher. While you might be tempted by the massive fire rate of the M60 machine gun, or the range of the M107 sniper rifle, we recommend the Rx4 Storm SD. It's a default weapon for the rifleman, but one of the best. Its suppressor reduces noise and muzzle flash, so it's less likely to give your position away, and lack of recoil makes it accurate. It's lethal too, with a burst to body mass enough to drop any enemy.

2 Class
There are four classes. Each receives bonuses depending on specialisation. So grenadiers are more accurate with grenade launchers, automatic rifleman can handle heavy calibre, full-auto weapons and marksmen specialise in sniping. Rifleman is the best class. They favour machine guns which, equipped with a x8 sight, make them great snipers with better accuracy when moving. Unlike other classes, accuracy doesn't suffer with weapons outside their specialisation.

3 Map
Monument Hill is one of the most varied levels. It's a small European village that manages to pack loads of things into its sun-drenched Mediterranean streets. For starters there are networks of tight alleyways that create pitched battles as you fight to claim each corner. There's also a large market square full of stalls and low walls to hide behind, plus numerous sniping points overlooking the open areas. It's our favourite map by quite a long way.

SKILLS Staying alive

Keep against a wall so you reduce where the enemy can attack from. Avoid open ground like the painful, bullet-ridden death trap it is.

Switch to first-person. Without a soldier on screen distracting you and obscuring half the view, you're more likely to spot the enemy.

Jam your finger on the trigger at the first sign of trouble and you'll hit nothing but sky. Use short bursts of gunfire to stay accurate.

Online highlights

Team deathmatch

1

2

3

4

5

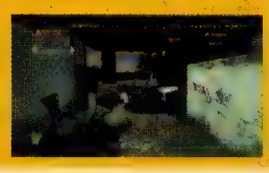
Harshest insult

"Nooooooooo! Aaaaarrrgh! SH*T!"

Community service

Test your metal

If you want a real challenge then try this out: choose Elimination (Deathmatch) mode on the Shoreline map and select 'pistols only' from the kit option. It's brutally-paced combat with little cover and, as everyone's equally matched, it's down to skill to win.

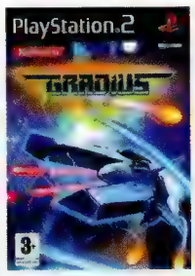


ON THE DISC
PS2 is short of 2D shooters – check PSM Call Of Duty 4 instead

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Gradius V – the greatest shoot 'em up on PS2, bar none

Steve Bailey



Pub Konami
Dev Treasure
FYI PS2 | 2004 | PSM51 83% | This is a shooter capable of converting nearly anyone to the side-scrolling cause.

You don't have to be that much of a videogame librarian to associate the *Gradius* franchise with Konami. One of the better-known shoot-'em-up series, it's still a worthy addition to the list of retro bundles and it was a far from shameless choice to recycle for PSP. But *Gradius V* is different. It doesn't rest on former glories. It's not just a sequel and it wasn't developed by Konami, but by Treasure, a 15-year-old studio struck up by a squad of ex-Konami employees.

Renowned for its corking imagination and Gandalf-like ability to squeeze the best out of a console, Treasure has crafted some of the most revered underground videogames in, well, *ever*.

PS2 owners wouldn't have known that, though, given that Treasure's first two games for the format – *Silpheed* and *Freak Out* – left a lot to be desired. Then *Gradius V* popped out of the studio's unpredictable womb, and Treasure finally showed the world what it could *really* do with PS2. There are no gimmicks. It's just a left-right scrolling shoot 'em up, the kind you used to play in the arcades back when 10p pieces were man-sized, a verse-chorus rhythm of blasting through a stage in order to get to a boss. But it's 'just' a shoot 'em up in the same way that *PES* is 'just' a football game.

The eyes have it

Before anything else, it looks electric. Genuinely handsome 2D games are few and far apart, but *Gradius V*'s colours sizzle like few others, as lasers sear and streak across pristine backgrounds and enemies belch bullets in pin-sharp patterns; as far as your brain is concerned, this is high-def gaming, HDTV or no HDTV. As your ship upgrades, it evolves from a pootling portable machine gun into a missile-spewing deathfest that roasts the eyes. Bosses fill up the screen with streams of devious, psyche-out firepower that's much more cunning than it first appears, forcing you to evade in one direction before they let rip with a giddying suckerpunch.

Take the very first boss, for example. It'll shoot out a pair of impassable laser beams across the middle of the screen,

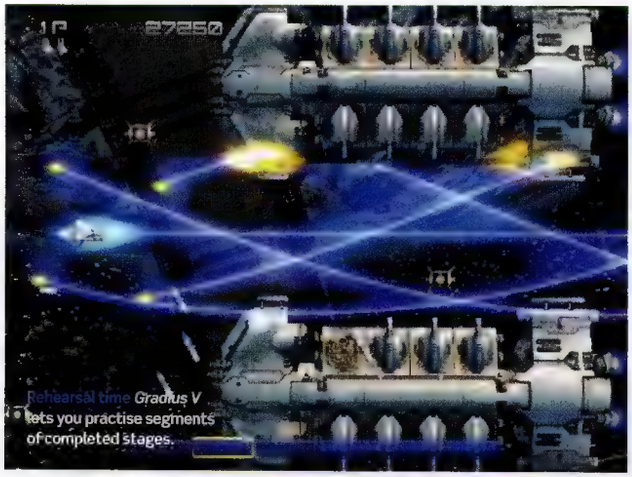
EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *Gradius V*? Let us know: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

The defining moment...

So, you've played *Gradius V* for an hour or two on the easiest setting. You can ace the first level without losing a life and the attack patterns of the Stage 2 boss are an assault you can comfortably survive. So, for a laugh, you slap the game onto the hardest difficulty section and get stuck in. And it's like trying to set fire to ash. You set a new record for misadventure, and then maybe bumble off to YouTube to watch some Japanese masters (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ–JqQ1Tfo) showboating the fact that it's actually possible to survive the bedazzling waves of death that *Gradius V* tries to spear you with. It's at this point that you either walk away muttering, or fall completely in love.

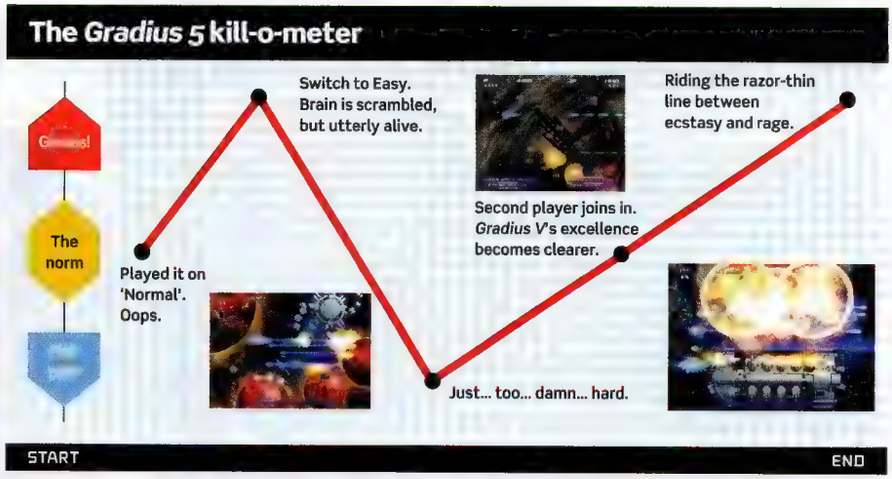
GameAmmo

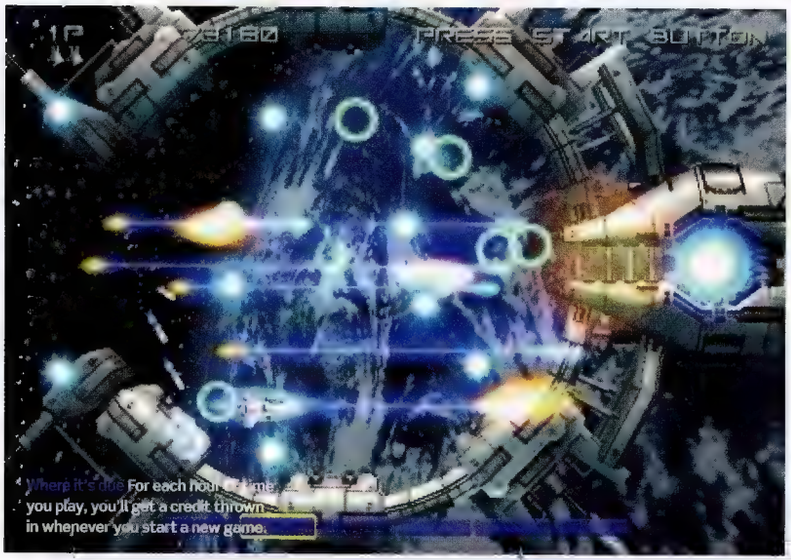
"Konami released a DVD (called 'THE PERFECT') dedicated to *Gradius V*"



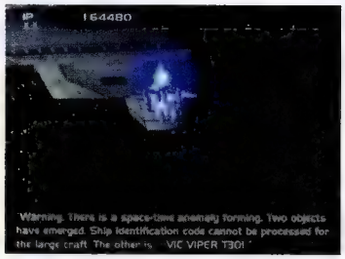
Rehearsal time *Gradius V* lets you practise segments of completed stages.

The *Gradius 5* kill-o-meter


Switch to Easy. Brain is scrambled, but utterly alive.
Riding the razor-thin line between ecstasy and rage.
Second player joins in. *Gradius V*'s excellence becomes clearer.
The norm
Played it on 'Normal'. Oops.
Just... too... damn... hard.
START
END



Where it's due For each hour of time you play, you'll get a credit thrown in whenever you start a new game.


164480
Warning. There is a space-time anomaly forming. Two objects have emerged. Ship identification code cannot be processed for the large craft. The other is VIC VIPER T301

Very Easy being forgiving enough to suck you in but never afraid of spitting you back out for not paying attention. And don't be fooled – moving on up through the difficulty settings isn't just a case of learning to dodge more bullets. As the difficulty ups, attack patterns don't just intensify, but change entirely and bosses that were a cakewalk warp into entirely new gauntlets.

usually sandwiching you. Which isn't stressful in the slightest... until the whole thing starts rotating. "No problem," you think, as you move safely to the centre of the screen and watch this dopey metal bastard shoot itself hoarse. Until it starts firing five-way spreads of big blue bullets around the place, and suddenly you're in some kind of futuristic maths lesson that your brain has to rush to solve. It's normally at this point you start yelping and gurning, leaning in tandem with your ship in a bid to escape death. That's just the *first* boss. You'll soon come to see these showdowns as the videogame equivalent of Saw's fiendish survive-or-die situations, where raw instinct and reflexes are the only way to go. Maybe it's not such a bad idea to bring a second player along with you...

If that all sounds somewhat extreme, don't worry. *Gradius V* has five difficulty settings, with

Five's alive

Whatever flavour of gamer you are, it's very unlikely you got into games because of the stories. Or because you like fiddling with camera settings. Or because you enjoy solving elaborate lock 'n' key puzzles. It's likely because you find them hellishly entertaining, and they make your brain ignite in a way that few other things can. And so, if you see *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* as the blue pill, *Gradius V* is the red pill. It's a phenomenal mix of fury and elegance, a dazzling shoot 'em up that stands tall among PS2's best-in-genre standouts, beating its chest, wearing a pirate hat and whizzing on the (admittedly limited) competition. And you know what the punchline is? *Gradius V* comes on a CD-ROM. Take *that*, texture-hogging Blu-ray monsters.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Its stunning twitch-action will never age
Final thought Possibly the best brain-training currently available to PS2 and PS3 owners, and the reigning king of PlayStation shoot 'em ups.

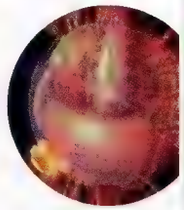
The Top 5

Gradius V bosses

1 Stage 2
Made up of four separate encounters, it's this boss' final phase – where you have to dodge between great, boggling waves of blue energy – that blows the dust from your brain.

2 Stage 3
An arachnid-walker beast that chases you slowly down a tunnel. Blocks can be used as shields, until the giant spiderbot kicks them flying.

3 Stage 1
A huge pincer-shaped spaceship that materialises *around* you. Seems like some free-gift pushover until it starts spinning...



4 Stage 4
A pulsating heart that shoots out vicious fangs, spinning columns of electricity and laser-spilling eyeballs. Eeek.

5 Stage 5
You'll be chased by two fat mine-laying ships through a packed asteroid field. The kicker? This is just foreplay...

Koj hires top models for MGS4

Hideo Kojima, the Swiss-Roll of the games industry, *loves* women. The *MGS* series is the perviest on PlayStation, with gratuitious cleavage shots (EVA in *MGS3*), sexy photography mini-games (*MGS: VR Missions*) and the infamous terrorist-distracting filth mags - now viewable in first-person on PS3. To further enhance his image as a ladies' man, Koj recently revealed that *MGS4*'s bosses - the Beauty and the Beast unit (pictured right) - would be played by real-life, motion-captured, supermodels, to convey the idea that they were beautiful girls before the horrors of war mutated them into mechanical monsters. A genuine artistic decision? Or an excuse to hang around with busty models? Hmmm.

The Beauties are perhaps Koj's maddest idea since Liquid's severed arm possessing Revolver Ocelot, and are based loosely on bosses from the original *Metal Gear Solid* on PSone. "They suffered shellshock and their minds were damaged beyond repair," explains the new trailer's mystery narrator. "The only way they could cope with the reality of battle was to become war machines." Yes.

Daft? Sure. Surprising? Not entirely. At the 2006 Tokyo Game Show, Kojima appeared on stage with actress Yumi Kikuchi to demonstrate how he'd scanned her face in-game, teasing that 'real people' would feature in *MGS4* for a 'secret' reason. Koj hasn't confirmed which girl plays which boss, but here's our guess...

YUMI KIKUCHI

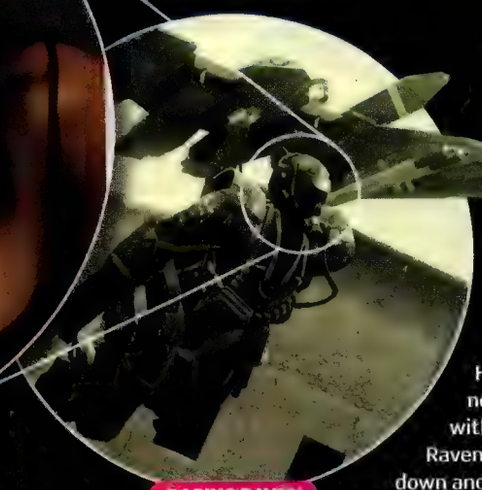
A Japanese DJ, actress and telly host. She appeared on stage with Kojima at Leipzig, explaining how difficult it was to 'get in character'. What? She's never played a psychotic robot octopus before?

LAUGHING OCTOPUS

Remember Decoy Octopus in *MGS*? Probably not, because he was never seen; he was in the guise of the DARPA chief the whole time. Anyway, this Beauty is obviously a play on that character, but with the deadly octo-arms of Solidus Snake. Laughs a lot too, hence the name.

MIEKO RYE

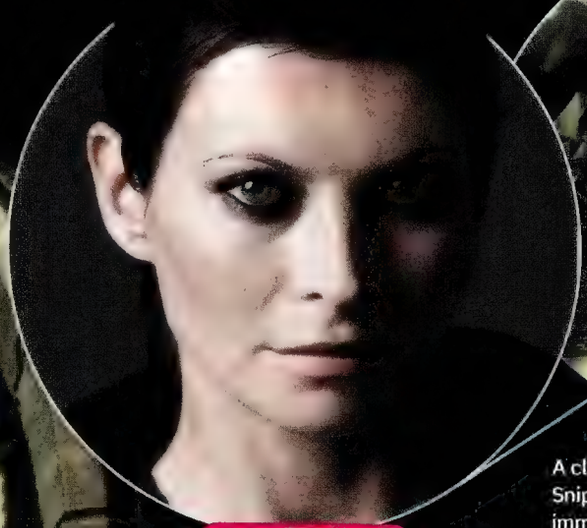
This girl's had her thighs out in lad's mag Maxim and does 'fashion stuff', but other than that there's very little information about her career. Oh, well.



RAGING RAVEN

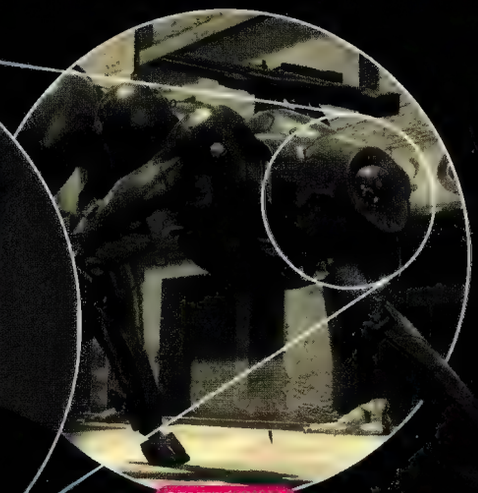
Having absolutely nothing in common with namesake Vulcan Raven, this thing swoops down and slices soldiers in half with its wings, all the time screaming "Raaaage!" It's a bit silly and the voice acting is embarrassingly bad, but it'll still make for an exciting boss battle.

"Gratuitious first-person cleavage shots of Eva played a major role in *MGS3*"



SCARLETT CHORVAT

Of all the *MGS4* models, Scarlett's been the busiest. She was in season 6 of *24*, starred in hit US comedy drama Entourage and was in Ben Stiller flick Dodgeball.



CRYING WOLF

A clear homage to sultry sharpshooter Sniper Wolf, this robotic canine has immense strength and bullets ping helplessly off its thick armour. In the trailer it topples a digger over and howls victoriously. Will the boss battle involve luring it out of hiding with slabs of robot meat? We hope so.

LYNDALL JARVIS

A platinum-haired South African model whose measurements are 34-24-34. She's a US dress size 6 – which means she's thin like a twiglet, but sort-of normal for a supermodel. We like her hair, too.

SCREAMING MANTIS

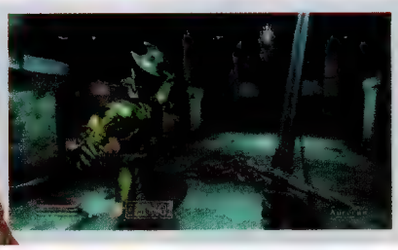
It's Psycho Mantis, but with more arms and two tiny puppets hanging from invisible strings, both representing Mantis and The Sorrow, *MGS3*'s bespectacled ghost man. In the trailer she kills a soldier and dangles his body around like a marionette. What a mentalist. Literally.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS3 reviews section for the latest games

PS3 Top Ten

TOP TWO

1 ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION
Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Bethesda | **Web** elderscrolls.com



"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."
PSM3 Rating 93%

2 WARHAWK
Pub Sony | **Dev** Incognito | **Web** us.playstation.com/warhawk

"A masterpiece of balance and design. The jewel in Sony's online crown – the perfect Network showcase."
PSM3 Rating 90%

THREE TO FIVE

3 RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN
Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac
Web us.playstation.com

"An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff."
PSM3 Rating 89%

4 MOTORSTORM
Pub Sony | **Dev** Evolution
Web motorstorm.com

"Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises."
PSM3 Rating 88%

5 COLIN MCRAE: DIRT
Pub Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters
Web codemasters.com/dirt

"Has improvements over the Xbox 360 game, and as a single player experience, *DiRT* is nothing short of brilliant."
PSM3 Rating 88%

SIX TO EIGHT

6 VIRTUA FIGHTER 5
Pub Sega | **Dev** AM2 | **Web** sega.com/vf5

"Perhaps the best scrapper ever, but *Virtua Fighter 5* is *such* an acquired taste. Still, technically flawless."
PSM3 Rating 87%

7 GHOST RECON 2
Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Web ghostrecon.com

"An almost flawlessly conceived and realised war simulator. Xbox port it may be, but it's still top stuff."
PSM3 Rating 86%

8 VIRTUA TENNIS 3
Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo | **Web** sega.com

"No online play, but still the best multi-player game on PS3. A must-buy for *Virtua Tennis* fans everywhere."
PSM3 Rating 85%

NINE TO TEN

9 CALL OF DUTY 3
Pub Activision | **Dev** Treyarch
Web callofduty.com

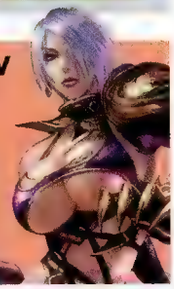
"The only additions PS3 offers above the PS2 game is shinier, sharper graphics. Still, the next-gen starts here."
PSM3 Rating 82%

10 EVERYBODY'S GOLF 5
Pub Sony | **Dev** Clap Hanz
Web us.playstation.com

"Enjoyable, uncomplicated and lovelier than a kitten in a bib. A great alternative to *Tiger*."
PSM3 Rating 81%

PSM3'S MOST WANTED

SOUL CALIBUR IV
Pub Namco | **Dev** Namco
Web fallout.bethsoft.com



User-created characters in online battle? 'Realistic' physics? We can't wait for this.

AVOID

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT

"This is one of the worst games we've played for ages. A disgrace on pretty much every level."
PSM3 Rating 28%

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

"A budget PlayStation 2 game wearing its big sister's high-definition make-up. Stick to *Burnout*."
PSM3 Rating 36%

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

"Dull, uninspired and a complete waste of PS3's power. Fantastic? They're not even adequate."
PSM3 Rating 39%

Out now on Blu-ray Movies for your PS3

FEELGOOD

Gridiron Gang
Stars The Rock, Xzibit
Web sonypictures.com
You might dismiss this as rubbish, because it stars the Rock as a former US footballer turned detention centre supervisor, taking a side of 'disenfranchised' stroppy youths to American footballing glory. And, to be fair, you'd be right. It *is* rubbish.

ACTION-PACKED

Face/Off
Stars John Travolta, Nicolas Cage
Web tinyurl.com/uj27
John Woo gets John Travolta and Nic Cage to swap identities and then spend a couple of hours trying to shoot each other to bits. Impossibly exciting, if mindless, shooter that rarely lets up the pace. Is Woo's *Stranglehold* as exciting? See page 64 to find out.

PSYCHIC

Next
Stars Nicolas Cage, Julianne Moore
Web nextmovie.com
Ludicrous plot alert: Cage is magician Cris Johnson, who can see a few minutes into the future. He is, therefore, the perfect bloke for the US government to force to use his gifts to stop a massive terrorist attack. Obviously. A bit stupid, but oddly watchable.

Disagree with our scores? Mail your angry rants or alternative scores and Top Tens to: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 Top Ten!"

Back issues
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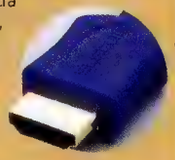
Ring our hotline on 0870 837 4773

PS3 For Beginners

New to PS3? Read this now

Composite? SCART? HDMI? I'm confused... do I need an expensive TV?
Yes. Anyone running PS3 through a standard def (i.e. old) TV is missing out on just how good games can look. You need a good 16:9 (i.e. widescreen) TV with an HDMI input. That's better than any kind of composite and SCART connection. If it's running at least 1080i/720p, that means that the TV is officially 'hi-def'. PS3 *can* output up to 1080p resolution (i.e. show even more pixels), so you could shell out the extra for a TV that can handle it, but only a few games use 1080p and you can't see the difference unless you set two TVs side by side.



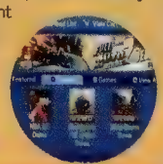
Why is Blu-ray so good?
Blu-ray is the best reason to spring for that 1080p set. All Blu-ray movies play at 1080p – the highest resolution you can get. Do you *need* Blu-ray? That's debatable now that PS3 can 'upscale' (i.e. run at hi-res) your old DVDs. Many 'old' DVDs that were well recorded look superb on PS3, meaning that re-buying your old movies on Blu-ray is a massive waste of cash. Still, in side-by-side comparisons Blu-ray does look sharper than DVD.

How do I connect to the net?
Simply select 'yes' to everything in your Internet Connection (under 'Settings') and PS3 should find the net and be up and running. Any problems, just phone your internet service provider and tell them you've got a PS3 – you'll need to know the primary and secondary DNS numbers they use. Choose 'Manual' rather than 'Auto' and tap these into the settings.

How do I add Friends?
Like any good party, the trick is being invited. Your PS Network ID is the key here. Tell this to a friend and they can send you a Friend Request message from their PS3. The friend request will then appear on your PS3. Simply say 'Yes' and both of you will have icons for each other on your machines. Now sending a message is just a click away, as is the ability to see when their PS3 is switched on and what they're playing.

How do I download stuff from the store?
The PS Store is in your PS3's Network menu. Select this for many free and reasonably priced downloads. We find the best way to keep abreast of what's hot is to check the 'Recent Additions' and 'Top Downloads' charts on the right of the front page. Simply click on them to start the download. Then choose 'Perform In Background' to do other things on your PS3 while they download. Sadly you can't yet play movies or games while downloading, but you can still surf the net without pausing the process.

How do I play music and video on my PS3?
All music and video appears on the Music and Video menus. Simple. Insert a CD and you can rip it to your hard drive from the Music menu. Video is slightly tougher. No, you can't rip DVDs or Blu-rays. Movies have to be in the right (MP4) format to play. These are easily available from the PS Store, or insert PSM3's disc and press Ⓐ to see the contents and be given an option to copy them to your hard drive.



High Definition TVs

Revealed: the best TVs for PS3 gaming – to suit any budget

£400 - £700

Toshiba 32WLT68

Looking for a high-def bargain? Toshiba's Regza range are inexpensive (and rumoured to use the same panels as higher priced offerings from Sony). This 32" gives the no-nonsense 1080i/720p performance you need for £650.
Also recommended: 26" Samsung LE26S86BD, £450 and Toshiba 26" Toshiba 26WLT66, £600.

£700 - £1000

Panasonic TX26LXD70

In the low £700 bracket Panasonic reign supreme. Other manufacturers only put their top quality TV-brains inside their 40" plus sets. Not so Panasonic. This 26-incher has the same innards as their top spec machines, so has the best picture and sound of any set this size.
Also recommended: 32" Sony 32V2500, £700 and 42" Philips 42PFL5522, £900.

£1000 - £1500

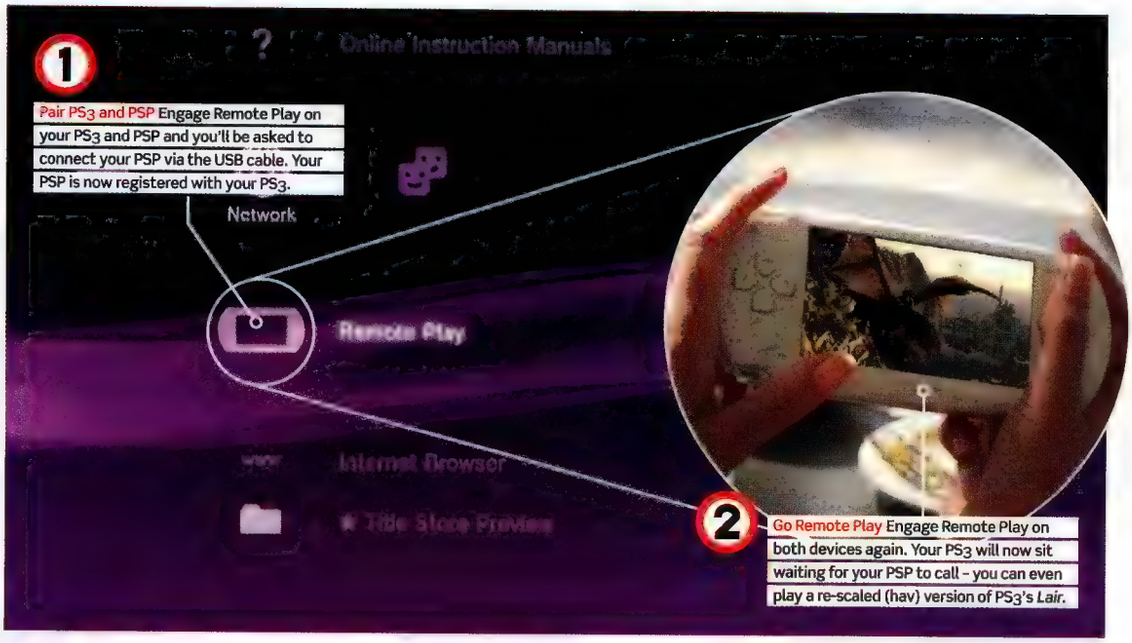
Sony 40W2000

Understanding the hierarchy of Sony's U, P, S, V, W, D and X series TVs is a baffling nightmare. Pick of the bunch has to be the 40" 40W2000 which gives full 1080p (the best image you can get) for around £1050.
Also recommended: 40" Samsung LE40M86BDX £1000 and 42" Pioneer 5080XD, £1500.

Tech-tips Send us your tech questions and tips. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Tech Tips!"

XMB In-Depth: Remote Play

This month: How to play PS3 files (and games) on your PSP


1
Pair PS3 and PSP Engage Remote Play on your PS3 and PSP and you'll be asked to connect your PSP via the USB cable. Your PSP is now registered with your PS3.
Online Instruction Manuals
Network
Remote Play
Internet Browser
2
Go Remote Play Engage Remote Play on both devices again. Your PS3 will now sit waiting for your PSP to call – you can even play a re-scaled (hav) version of PS3's Lair.

Your PS3's Remote Play feature lets you enjoy your movies and music on the move – or, better yet, play full PS3 games (*Lair* is the only confirmed title so far). You'll need a PSP, mind.

Forget lugging clumsy audio and video gear – you simply carry your PSP and use it to access your PS3 from anywhere in the world. To use it, connect your PSP to PS3 via a USB cable. Your PSP will give you the option to connect directly or 'Via Internet'. Choose to connect directly. This will use the Wi-Fi of PSP to connect to your PS3. Voila – your PS3 menu appears on your PSP. Now just use your console as you would with your joypad and big TV.

Drawbacks? You can only play videos that are copied to the hard drive (no DVDs or Blu-rays). You need wireless internet when you want to watch movies or look at photos – so forget browsing snaps halfway up Everest. And your PS3 needs to be on. (Fancy leaving it on for a week while you're away? Thought not.)

But the results are good quality. If you rip your DVDs to MP4 format (see pspvideo9.com for software to do this) and copy across your CDs, they'll look excellent on your small screen.

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PS2 games rated? Go here

PS2 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
SPORTS	**FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** easports.com "We're treated to a host of (almost) living, breathing and bleeding boxers. Looks superb." **PSM3 Rating** 89%	**VIRTUA TENNIS 2** **Pub** Acclaim | **Dev** Sega | **Web** sega.com "Far from perfect, but combines utterly addictive arcade action with sim-like depth. Simply smashing." **PSM3 Rating** 88%	**EVERYBODY'S GOLF** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Sony **Web** playstation.com "While never hugely difficult, it's all so warm and relaxing that it doesn't really matter much." **PSM3 Rating** 87%
DRIVING/RACING	**BURNOUT REVENGE** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Criterion | **Web** burnout3.ea.com "There are more races, action, gameplay twists and stuff to arse about with than the entirety of the rest of the series." **PSM3 Rating** 93%	**GRAN TURISMO 4** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** Polyphony **Web** ganturismoworld.com "Nothing can stop the pleasure this flings in your face at 60 frames per second." **PSM3 Rating** 92%	**COLIN MCRAE '04** **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters **Web** codemasters.co.uk "These cars really feel like a ton of metal being slid around mud at ridiculous speeds. Terrifically realistic" **PSM3 Rating** 92%
PARTY/EYETOY/BEMANI	**GUITAR HERO 2** **Pub** Red Octane | **Dev** Red Octane | **Web** guitarherogame.com "Addresses every criticism and packs in a load of new stuff. A masterclass in sequel-making. Get it." **PSM3 Rating** 92%	**SINGSTAR** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Sony | **Web** singstargame.com "A bit of a duffer alone, with friends it's possibly the best game ever. Classy and genuinely groundbreaking." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**BUZZ: THE MUSIC QUIZ** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Relentless **Web** playstation.com "A brilliant idea. Loads of questions and a truly inspired peripheral." **PSM3 Rating** 84%
ACTION	**GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS** **Pub** Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar | **Web** gta-sanandreas.com "*GTA*'s not perfect, but it's the single greatest achievement on PS2. You may not love it, but you have to respect it." **PSM3 Rating** 99%	**CANIS CANEM EDIT** **Pub** Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar **Web** rockstargames.com "Jimmy is one of the most charismatic characters ever. It goes right to the top of the class" **PSM3 Rating** 93%	**GOD OF WAR 2** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** SCEA **Web** godofwargame.com "Like running eyes-first into a wall of beauty, *God Of War 2* is another PS2 masterpiece. Captivating." **PSM3 Rating** 93%

Art appreciation We don't know about art, but we know what we like

MONA LISA

The Da Vinci Code

Pub 2K Games \| **Dev** The Collective
Web 2kgames.com/davincicode
Rubbish puzzles and the ludicrous emphasis on combat. Could an RE teacher – oh, OK, a professor of religious symbolism – *really* duff up an armed copper? And, more importantly, would he want to? Seems unlikely to us.
PSM3 Rating 68%

THIEVERY

The Plan

Pub Midas \| **Dev** Monte Cristo
Web midasinteractive.com
An exciting split-screen 24-style dynamic does nothing to rescue this mediocre art theft-'em-up. You and some criminal chums are out to nick paintings, but the enemy AI is diabolical. There's a nice trip round Prague Art Gallery, though.
PSM3 Rating 48%

DUBIOUS

Canis Canem Edit

Pub Rockstar \| **Dev** Rockstar
Web rockstargames.com/canis
Bulworth Academy's art lessons are 'interesting' – the paintings Jimmy sketches are gradually unveiled to be increasingly seductive portraits of his art teacher reclining on a sofa. Is this legal? We're pretty sure something's not right here.
PSM3 Rating 93%

@ **Disagree with our choices?** Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word-bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No one bought it. We explain

Mad Maestro

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Fresh | **Web** eidosinteractive.com

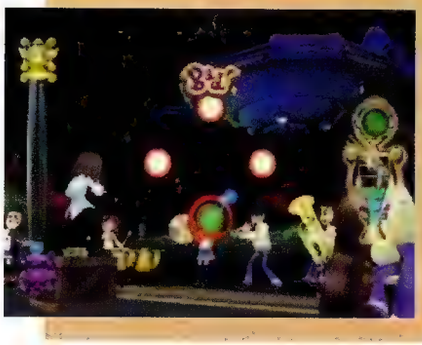
The rawk of *Guitar Hero?* The Japanese madness of *Gitaroo Man*? The silky pop of *Space Channel 5*? If these all leave you cold, there is one other rhythm-action option you might not have tried – the classic stylings of *Mad Maestro*.

Yeah, we know – you think classical music is boring, right? So does everyone else, which is why *Mad Maestro* proved less popular with the public than a silver bullet salesman at a werewolf convention. None of which means, however, that *Mad Maestro* is a bad game.

Classical proves a surprisingly challenging genre to tap buttons along to – changing tempo at the drop of a hat. On top of that, *Mad Maestro* incorporates a 'pressure' system, asking you to jab buttons with either light, medium or heavy pressure which, when you're frantically trying to keep pace with Beethoven's 40th Symphony K550 1st Movement, is much trickier to deal with than it sounds. Nimble fingerwork is required. Then, of course, you're trying to watch the story playing out in the background – so when you're watching an alien invasion being repelled by the power of music while playing along to Wagner's Flight Of The Valkyries, it can prove distracting from the music.

Eventually, once you've proved the worth of classical tuneage to *MM*'s locals, you'll get to stage full concerts. Our advice? Forget what you think you know about classical music, and try this one out.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk



PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	(04)	**Resistance: Fall Of Man** Sony Reviewed PSM86 89%	
02	(03)	**MotorStorm** Sony Reviewed PSM86 88%	
03	(07)	**F1: Championship Edition** Sony Reviewed PSM86 50%	
04	NEW	**Transformers** Activision Reviewed PSM91 52%	
05	NEW	**Rainbow Six Vegas** Ubisoft Reviewed PSM90 76%	
06	NEW	**The Darkness** Take Two Reviewed PSM90 71%	
07	(10)	**Fight Night Round 3** EA Reviewed PSM86 78%	
08	(01)	**Ninja Gaiden Sigma** Eidos Reviewed PSM90 80%	
09	(12)	**Ridge Racer 7** Sony Reviewed PSM86 79%	
10	(04)	**Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion** Ubisoft Reviewed PSM87 93%	
11	(06)	**Harry Potter: OOTP** EA Reviewed PSM90 55%	
12	(16)	**Virtua Tennis 3** Sega Reviewed PSM86 85%	
13	(08)	**Call Of Duty 3** Activision Reviewed PSM86 82%	
14	RE	**Genji: Days Of The Blade** Sony Reviewed PSM86 60%	
15	(17)	**Virtua Fighter 5** Sega Reviewed PSM86 87%	
16	RE	**Need For Speed Carbon** EA Reviewed PSM86 58%	
17	(16)	**Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07** EA Reviewed PSM86 81%	
18	(14)	**POTC: At World's End** Disney Reviewed PSM89 55%	
19	(18)	**F.E.A.R.** Sierra Reviewed PSM86 72%	
20	NEW	**Surf's Up** Ubisoft Reviewed PSM93 51%	

Want it? Tick it!

Robots in despair

Depressingly, this turned out to be one of the most disappointing games of the year – stilted, tedious and very little fun at all. Bah.

Cack magic

Depressingly, this turned out to be one of the most dis... oh, so *that's* what deja vu feels like. We were honestly really looking forward to *Potter* as well.

Daze of the blade

What's *Genji* doing back in the charts? Perhaps the *Heavenly Sword* hype got you in the mood for some slashery. Check the review of that on page 68.

500 Million

The amount of cash, in dollars, that MTV will pump into its new games portfolio over the next two years.

You're playing...

Martyn Price
He looks a bit like a vampire, but one who loves PS3.

1 **Ico** "Atmosphere is incredibly difficult to evoke in a videogame – this one does it so effortlessly."
2 **MotorStorm** "Incredible graphics, immersive sound and a time trial that adds a sense of community."
3 **Super Stardust** "Simply put, the most addictive game since *Tetris*, and at a bargain price."

We're playing...

David Cook
This is what the inside of a Prod Ed's nose looks like.

1 **God Hand** "Highlight so far? Being bellyflopped by a gorilla at a bus stop. Not good in real life, mind."
2 **Pro Evo 2008** "Only the PS2 preview code mind, which – sadly – ain't quite as good as PS2 *PES6*."
3 **Psi-Ops** "Just going back to this one – still the best use of psychic powers in any game yet."

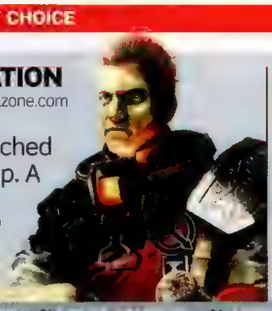
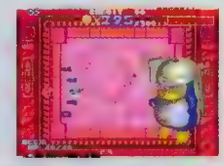
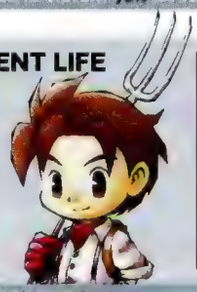
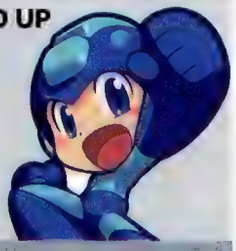
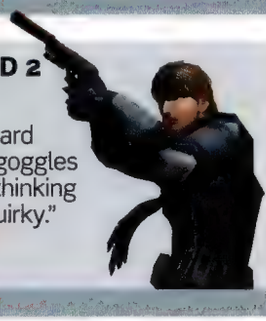
They're playing...

Daniel Maher
From dragon scales to music scales for *Lair*'s producer.

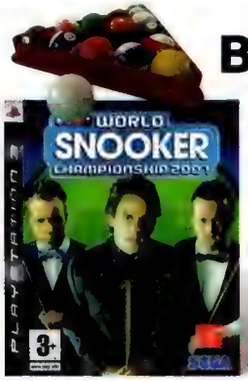
1 **Guitar Hero 2** "*Rocks The '80s* has been vanquished, so I'm back to trying to crack 'Jordan' on Expert."
2 **Super Stardust** "Pure old-school chaos dressed in very pretty trousers. Meteor-smashing bliss."
3 **Puzzle Quest** "*Bejeweled* + RPG clichés galore = the best way to make an hour commute fly by."

ON THE DISC
See what PS3 is capable of on your free DVD

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
SHOOTERS/ SHOOT-EM-UPS	**KILLZONE: LIBERATION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **Web** killzone.com "The FPS has been ditched for a friendly 3D set-up. A massively enjoyable blaster that suits PSP perfectly." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 	**SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com "*Fireteam Bravo* not only looks lush on the tiny screen, it handles like a dream as well. A seamless experience." **PSM3 Rating** 83% 	**PARODIUS PORTABLE** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** konami.com "*Parodius* and its four sequels. Contains space penguins and aubergine-spouting mountains." **PSM3 Rating** 81% 
ODDBALL	**GITAROO MAN LIVES!** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk "A rhythm action game with all the visual flair of a Japanese anime and the most eclectic soundtrack ever." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 	**HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE** **Pub** 505 Game Street | **Dev** Arte Piazza **Web** hmfarm.com "Till land, sow seeds, water crops... discover what it means to feel love through the nurturing of pumpkins." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 	**EVERY EXTEND EXTRA** **Pub** Q Entertainment | **Dev** Bandai **Web** everyextendextra.com "You play a bomb. Blow up everything in your radius and get combos for massive points. Very good indeed." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
PLATFORMERS	**RATCHET AND CLANK: SIZE MATTERS** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** High Impact | **Web** us.playstation.com "Beautiful and frantic – an eye-to-brain feast that's luxuriously realised." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 	**DAXTER** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Ready at Dawn **Web** naughtydog.com "Looks and plays so much like *Jak 2* that it's a bit unnerving. Get it." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 	**MEGAMAN POWERED UP** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom **Web** megaman.co.uk "Monstrously hard and requires the dexterity of a cyborg concert pianist. Playable." **PSM3 Rating** 78% 
RPG/ STRATEGY	**METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Kojima Studios **Web** konami.com "A compromised imitation of a classic, but easily one of PSP's best single-player games yet." **PSM3 Rating** 83% 	**FIELD COMMANDER** **Pub** Ubisoft | **Dev** Sony Online **Web** fieldcommander.station.sony.com "You get a real sense of achievement as your gang of upstarts turns the tables on your overwhelming foe." **PSM3 Rating** 82% 	**METAL GEAR ACID 2** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami **Web** konami.com "Tactical Japanese card game with a pair of goggles to fool the eye into thinking the game is in 3D. Quirky." **PSM3 Rating** 80% 

Baize the lord Join the cue for PS2's pool and snooker games



LOW TECH

World Snooker Champs 2007

Pub Sega | **Dev** Blade
Web sega-europe.com
You've got your PS3 – what game do you get to show off its power? Snooker? Are you mad? Besides, it looks awful – the players heads keep vanishing. Decent game, mind.
PSM3 Rating 74%

RELAXING

Pool Paradise

Pub Ignition | **Dev** Awesome Studios
Web ignitionent.com
Takes place on a beautiful tropical island, with suitable ambient music and bird calls. You could convince yourself you're playing pool in Hawaii. But you'd soon realise differently. And then you'd have a little cry in disappointment.
PSM3 Rating 72%

HUMDRUM

International Cue Club 2

Pub Midas | **Dev** Takari
Web midasinteractive.com
A fair enough attempt at a snooker and pool sim, but not terribly exciting. Comes with a range of bonus 'wonky' tables, though, including one shaped like a three-leaf clover. Most peculiar.
PSM3 Rating 56%

@ **Disagree with our choices?** Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

Nice Apps

Trick up your console

Screen setter

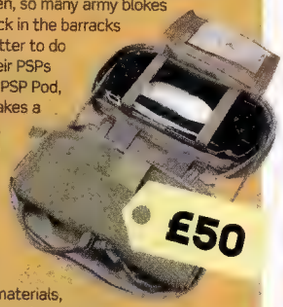
App Clip-on seven-inch LCD PS3 screen
Web nevover.com

PS3 is many excellent things, but one thing you wouldn't ever say it qualifies as is portable. This hasn't stopped the people at Nevover from knocking together a clip-on LCD screen. Still, a console isn't a console if you can't buy an attachable screen for it, so we guess we can say PS3 has finally arrived. This particular screen is a decent-sized seven inches, has a headphone socket and flips down for easy portability. So if you're determined to play *Gundam* in childish protest as your girlfriend watches Hollyoaks in 42" 1080p on *your* HDTV this could be ideal.

In the army now

App Military-style PSP case
Web tadgear.com

On the surface, it sounds a bit ridiculous – a hard-wearing PSP pouch designed especially for soldiers. But then, so many army blokes spend ages stuck in the barracks with nothing better to do then play on their PSPs – so maybe the PSP Pod, as it's called, makes a lot of sense. So, this comes with "a heavy-duty coil zupper and ID card flap", made from MILSPEC – that's military specification – materials, with space for 'morale patches' – those badges you sometimes see soldiers wearing on their uniforms. Good, stuff, then – expensive, mind, but these are limited edition, which might explain it.



Raw power

App PSP external battery
Web usbfever.com

This is a handy external battery that you can plug into your PSP to recharge its juice as and when its needed. It's not just for PSP either, so those of you with iPods, digital cameras or Sony Ericsson, Motorola or Nokia mobile phones can use it on those as well. And then, when the battery itself runs low on power, you can just recharge it through a wall socket.

Power up
Add energy to your PSP.

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule

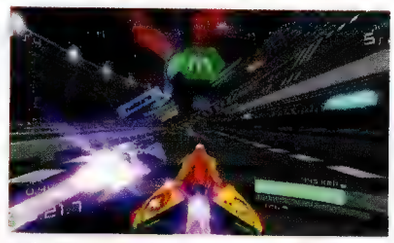
Want it? Tick it!

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	
FIFA '08	EA	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Lair	Sony	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Sega Rally	Sega	Sep 28	PS3	☐
SingStar	Sony	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Ratatouille	THQ	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Home	Sony	Oct 4	PS3	☐
Stranglehold	Midway	Oct 5	PS3	☐
NBA Live 08	EA	Oct 5	PS3	☐
Half-Life 2: The Orange Box		Oct 5	PS3	☐
Skate	EA	Oct 12	PS3	☐
Folklore	Sony	Oct 12	PS3	☐
Juiced 2	THQ	Oct 19	PS3	☐
ATV Offroad Fury 4	Sony	Oct 19	PS2	☐
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes	Namco	Oct 19	PSP	☐
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Konami	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Dark Sector	D3P	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Clive Barker's Jericho	Codemasters	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Conan	THQ	Oct 26	PS3	☐
NHL 2K8	2K Sports	Oct 26	PS3	☐
NBA 2K8	2K Sports	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Crash Of The Titans	Sierra	Oct 26	PS2	☐
Silent Hill Origins	Konami	Oct 26	PSP	☐
WipEout Pulse		Oct 26		☐
Need For Speed ProStreet	EA	Nov 2	PS3	☐
The Simpsons	EA	Nov 2	PS3	☐
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	Eidos	Nov 9	PS3	☐
WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008	THQ	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Eidos	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Medal Of Honor: Airborne	EA	Nov 16	PS3	☐
Army Of Two	EA	Nov 16	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	Nov 16	PS3	☐
High School Musical: Sing It	Disney	Nov 16	PS2	☐
Haze	Ubisoft	Nov 23	PS3	☐
The Eye Of Judgement	Sony	Nov 23	PS3	☐
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	Sony	Nov 30	PS3	☐
Call Of Duty 4	Activision	Nov 30	PS3	☐
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Activision	Nov 30	PS3	☐
The Golden Compass	Sega	Dec 7	PS3	☐
Alone In The Dark 5	Atari	Dec 7	PS3	☐

Caution: all release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change

Half-Life 2: The Orange Box

Worth it for *Half-Life 2* alone, but with *Episode One* and *Two*, plus *Team Fortress 2* and *Portal* this might be the best £40 you ever spend. Insane value.



WipEout Pulse

While *WipEout* is certainly getting a bit long in the tooth, PSP's desperate for decent new games. See the review on page 84.

Tony Hawk's Proving Ground

You can see how *Skate* fares over on page 60, and next month we should review *THPG* – so we'll soon know who's the best skater on PS3.

eBay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

LocoRoco crochet hat

If this isn't the most wholesome photo we've printed in our 93-issue history, we'd be amazed. But what you can't deny is just how brilliant that hat is, how snug and warm it looks and how much – whatever you might say to the contrary to try and appear 'cool – you *desperately* want one. They make it custom-made for your head size, too.

Sold No **Original Price** $1.50
Profit None

Chun Li costume

Ah, Chun Li – object of a teenage crush for many male gamers out there of a 'certain age'. Meanwhile, female gamers into cosplay who feel like they've had enough of dressing up as Lara Croft or the stars of *Final Fantasy/Kingdom Hearts/Dragon Quest* could investigate this, which certainly looks the spit of Chun Li's actual *Street Fighter 2* outfit. Bit nippy for the winter, we'd think.

Sold $45.00 **Original Price** $39.99
Profit $5.01

Sonic 2 jacket

Oh, Sonic. We're sorry. It's just that, as we've said before, you have so much easy-to-mock promotional crap. This is probably the worst offender yet; a *Sonic 2* jacket, with the hog's big blue face on the back, and patches of Tails and Dr Robotnik splashed across the sleeve. It's rubbish. We might be in the minority, mind you, judging by the bidding war that went on. And the profit. Hmm. Where are those *Tak* jim-jams?

Sold $122.50 **Original Price** $8.00
Profit $114.50

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"Stunning – almost needlessly packed with detail"
page 22

***Viking* can make you feel quite ill**
"The echo of shattered bone and slopping intestine resonates"
page 52

***Skate* knocks *Hawk* off its perch...**
"It's like making a more realistic footy game than *Pro Evo* on your first go"
page 60

***Stranglehold* is a vandal's wet dream**
"The game's designed to be smashed up like an angry toddler"
page 70

Games can be confusing in numerous ways
"In *Yakuza*, you've got an angry, shotgun-toting trannie on your hands"
page 96

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ABC PSM3 24,121
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Ratchet and Clank's Dream Duo's

Ratchet and Clank are the original odd couple, but just imagine if certain other PlayStation characters got together...

Snake & Crash

Solid Snake – master of infiltration, philosopher, war hero – and Crash Bandicoot, giggling, spinning moron. Together they're unstoppable. Well, until Crash ruins everything by alerting the guards with his incessant whirling, cackling and apple-chomping until Snake snaps his neck.

James & Daxter

"I got a letter from my dead wife..." monologues James Sunderland, hero of *Silent Hill 2*. "Oh yeah?" screeches a voice in a broad New York accent. "Yer dead wife? Are ya sure she's dead? 'Cause dead people can't write lett-ahs! Ya schmuck! Hey, a Precursor orb! Er, James, put down that metal pipe, will yah? I was just yankin' ya chain! Aaaarrrrgh! My tiny head! Yoinks!"

Parappa & Kratos

When you're on a quest to defeat the Gods, there's very little a rapping dog can do to help directly. However, his spirit-lifting motto "I gotta believe!" assists when Kratos is down. "You... you're right, Parappa. I *do* believe! Yaaaaaaaargh! Ares will suffer! Do Cheep Cheep Cooking Chicken's rap again, will you? I like that one. Raaargh!"

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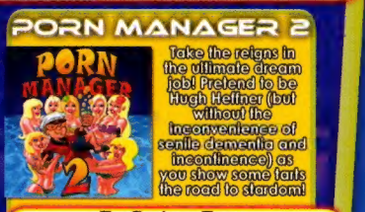
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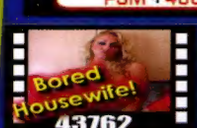

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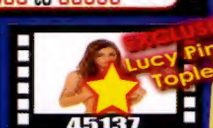

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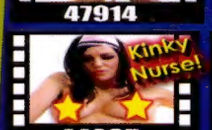

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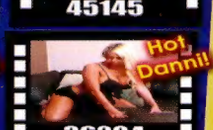

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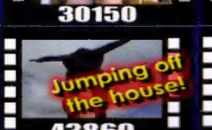

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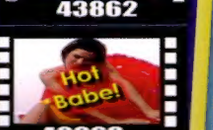

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